

THE
WITCH,
AND
THE MAID OF HONOUR.

VOL. I.



THE
WITCH,
AND
THE MAID OF HONOUR.

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— Tales
Of woeful ages, long ago betid. SHAKSPEARE.
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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

—
L O N D O N :
PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR ;
AND SOLD BY T. N. LONGMAN AND O. REES,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1799.

THE
WITCH

AND

THE MIND OF HONOUR.



IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

LONDON:

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PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1855.

TO THE
MAIDS OF HONOUR.

LADIES,

THE writer of the following trifle requests the honour of presenting to you the History of a Lady who formerly held the same exalted situation that you hold now. Permit Isabella Markham to solicit your patronage for the Author, who has the honour of being,

With great respect,

Your obedient humble Servant,

THE OLD WOMAN.

May 1, 1799.

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MAISON GLOST

P R E F A C E.

PRAY, Sir, in all the reading which you have ever read, did you ever read such a book, as *Locke's Essay upon the Human Understanding*? — Don't answer me rashly; because many, I know, quote the book who have not read it; and many have read it who understand it not. If either of these be your case, as I write to instruct, I will tell you in three words what the book is: it is a History.—“ A
“ History! of who? what? where?
“ when?”—Don't hurry yourself; it is a history book, Sir, (which may possibly recommend it to the world,) of what passes in a man's own mind; and if you will say so much of the book, and no more, believe me, you will cut no contemptible figure in a metaphysical circle.— But this by the way.

Now

Now if you will venture to go along with me, and look down into the bottom of this matter, it will be found that the cause of obscurity and confusion in the mind of man is threefold.

Dull organs, Dear Sir, in the first place: secondly, slight and transient impressions, made by the objects when the said organs are not dull: and, thirdly, a memory like unto a sieve, not able to retain what it has received.

5 JA 59

STOLEN.

THE

THE WITCH,
AND
THE MAID OF HONOUR.

LORD Harrington, of Exton, a remarkably handsome man, with good sense and sound morals, possessed all the accomplishments of a gentleman; he had ready wit, and was one of the brightest ornaments of the court of Elizabeth.

This nobleman was desperately in love with Isabella Markham, one of her majesty's maids of honour. My lord sighed and made verses; the lady was very reserved; and the queen kept a strict eye upon them; for, as she preferred

a life of celibacy herself, she was not pleased when those about her entered the marriage state. This affair was therefore carried on slowly ; and the queen growing old and daily declining, her great mind and good disposition lost their powers : the first degenerated into weakness, and the latter into fretfulness ; so much so indeed, that those of her attendants who had been accustomed to her former state, could ill bear the change.

Isabella Markham, being a favourite, felt those effects much more severely than the other ladies. Some have said, that these fine feelings proceeded from seeing her royal mistress so lost from what she was before ; others, that the queen's lectures always turned upon the inconveniences, the troubles, the miseries of the married state, frequently glancing

glancing at the passion of lord Harrington for the fair maid of honour; and after these conversations, she thought the queen more pettish than usual; or, as others will have it, the fair lady found her royal mistress's remarks more disagreeable. Whether it was one, the other, or both, is not certain; but certain it is, that the queen and the maid of honour were not so fond of each other's society as formerly.

Time however, which accomplishes all things, released this great queen from the troubles of this transitory life, after a long and glorious reign; and I believe that her subjects of all descriptions will ever revere her memory, and acknowledge that she possessed the happy art of governing with dignity to herself and happiness to them.

After a proper time had elapsed, the happy lord Harrington called Isabella Markham his wife. The new king was gracious; but how different was the court of James from that of Elizabeth! all elegance, all dignity, was flown with the mistress of England. The king was a pedant, fond of the wrangling of the schools, extremely superstitious and ill bred, spoke the English language imperfectly, and was the opposite of Elizabeth in every respect.

Lady Harrington sighed at the change: having for some years been accustomed to converse with Leicester, the Cecils, Essex, sir Philip Sidney, sir Fulke Greville, and other stars which shone at the English court, she found the conversation of the present courtiers extremely gross and offensive; but the Harringtons' fortunes not being large, and their family increasing,
they

they were resolved to stay in London, if possible, to better them. The king acknowledged them to be clever, polite, and good people : for the latter he liked them ; but as for the former qualities, they were disregarded : in short, not having any thing of the kind himself, he thought them useless accomplishments.

After a marriage of seven years, my lord and lady found themselves only company for each other. The manners of the court were entirely changed ; all that gallantry and high spirit which so eminently distinguished the reign of Elizabeth was fled ; all the courage and heroism which gave grace to the youth of her time, were lost in the spiritless James ; not a ray of glory ever illuminated his heart ; his head was full of polemical fancies ; and his conversation

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abounded with indelicacies, which he uttered as well as he could to the laughing courtiers.

Lady Harrington never went to court ; it was no place for women ; my lord, but seldom. Time passed on, and their four children grew rapidly, when a distant relation of lady Harrington's died and left her a thousand pounds. Their situation was an uneasy one ; they therefore resolved to leave London, and reside at Coombe Abbey near Coventry, which was my lord's paternal estate. The abbey was in good repair ; and prudence suggested, that five hundred of the thousand would render it comfortable, and they might reside there with much less expence than in London, where they had been so much neglected. The town furniture added to that at the abbey would render it well furnished,
at

at least as well as reasonable, prudent people could wish. A governor was provided from Oxford for the sons, and was occasionally to instruct the daughters.

They left London with a sigh, her ladyship's much more sincere than my lord's, as the metropolis had been her residence for some years; a great part of her youth was passed there; and a retrospection of our juvenile days is ever accompanied with a melancholy pleasure. She could not divest herself of the idea of the court of Greenwich, where her royal mistress was born; nor could she recollect Nonsuch without regret. Those times, would she think, are past by as a fleeting cloud, never to return. Was I happy when they existed? No, not perfectly so; but my uneasiness proceeded from trifles; yet I recollect that those trifles were serious things

things to me then; and perhaps ten or fifteen years hence, what now agitates my mind may appear quite as trifling; and then fifteen years farther, in all probability, if it be possible for frail mortality to remember, I may consider every nation beneath the moon as a hive of bees or a colony of ants. Busy world, farewell, farewell! I go not from a court to a cloister; but from a great city to an abbey; to retirement in the country, where, perhaps, I may not find one soul congenial with my own. Ungrateful that I am, to forget the source whence all my cares and pleasures proceed! But oh, my friend! the friend of my youth, had I but you to comfort me in my retirement, your good sense and eternal cheerfulness would gild the walls of a cottage. But that is impossible; you must be flown to a happier region, or your friend

Ifabella

Isabella would not so long have mourned your loss. Yet let me imitate your conduct when living; let me, while I recollect your virtues, endeavour to emulate them, and at the same time recall the natural courage of my heart and the fortitude of my mind to bear with patience and resignation every event which may happen.

The eldest son rode up, and observing that her horse did not travel with his usual spirit, inquired if he was well; for to flag at the beginning of a journey was a very bad symptom. "The fault is in myself, I believe," said his mother; "for I was attending to the fineness of the weather, and therefore let the animal do just as he pleased; but I cast my eyes toward you, and thought you seemed to be lost in meditation."—"So I was," he replied; "and

“and what do you think my thoughts
“were employed about?” — “Your
“horse, probably, or the hounds we
“are to have at the Abbey; or making
“a new set of fishing tackle; though
“I should be much more gratified if
“your studies were the object of your
“thoughts.” — “None of those, my
“dear mother; I was thinking what
“prince Henry might be doing. You
“know he was ever gracious to me;
“my father thinks proper to live at
“Coombe Abbey; I dare say he is right
“in so doing; but I extremely regret
“leaving the prince. He seems so
“brave, and so good, that I could lay
“down my life for him; and if he were
“king, I am sure it would be better for
“England.” — “How should you know,
“Robert, what is best for England?
“The king is a man of peace, and a
“good man; and your darling prince
“Henry

"Henry will, I hope, be king in time.
"Come, spur your horse, and let us
"join the rest."

The family of lord Harrington consisted of four children. Robert, the eldest, was just turned of fifteen; and his father, as all fathers are apt to flatter themselves, thought him a youth of parts. John was fourteen, and had no characteristics but fun and mischief; Elizabeth twelve, and Matilda ten. There was nothing uncommon in these children; they were well shaped and healthy, and, as far as could be judged, had good sense; and if they were properly educated were likely to be elegant ladies and gentlemen, and useful members of society.

They travelled on by easy stages till the turrets of Coombe Abbey appeared in
B 6 view.

view. Lord Harrington's heart acknowledged the place of his birth with a melancholy pleasure. Happy hours of childhood, he thought, how oft have I climbed and looked out of that turret window! how oft have I exercised my horse in the *ménage*, or myself at ball in the park! how quick I ran to join the hawking or hunting train, and how slowly did I return to my preceptor, and my studies! Yet I have found more resources in the latter than youth would waste a thought upon; but youth must be restrained (looking at his children); yet should I have been so strong as I am, if I had wasted more time over the midnight lamp? No, it would not have been possible: I must therefore, from my own feelings and experience, endeavour at least to bring up my sons to be useful members of society; I will enure their bodies to fatigue by exercise, and their

minds by degrees to study ; I will regulate my own time, and I hope to succeed.

“ My lord,” said Elizabeth, “ is that
 “ our house ? it seems to be very large.”
 “ Yes,” he replied, “ that is the abbey,
 “ the place where I was born, and where
 “ I passed so many agreeable days in my
 “ youth. But my father could not give
 “ me a large fortune, and I was sent into
 “ the world to endeavour to make one.
 “ This house was my elder brother’s,
 “ who lived many years after the death of
 “ my father. You say it looks very
 “ large, and it is so ; my brother lived
 “ in a much more expensive style than
 “ his fortune could bear, and died much
 “ in debt. As an honest man I have
 “ paid those debts, and hope to save
 “ fortunes for you, my children, by
 “ living prudently.”

“ It

“ It looks dreadfully frowning and
“ gloomy,” said Elizabeth.—“ It is the
“ character of this style of architecture;
“ it would not appear so magnificent,
“ if it were lighter; it formerly belonged
“ to a society of nuns, and, if I mistake
“ not, was first endowed by a Richard
“ de Camville, four hundred years ago;
“ but it has undergone many repairs and
“ alterations since its foundation, and,
“ gloomy as you now think it, has in
“ all probability been much more so;
“ four hundred years raise and destroy
“ innumerable buildings.”

“ Pray, my lord,” said lady Harrington, “ how came it into your family ?”
“ It was given,” replied my lord, “ to
“ an ancestor of mine by Edward the
“ Fourth, for taking Henry the Sixth
“ prisoner; and Henry the Eighth gave
“ the Bath estate I now possess, which
“ was

“ was church land, to my grandfather
“ when he married his natural daughter;
“ and your late royal mistress was my
“ godmother.”

They were now very near the Abbey;
the hazy twilight shadowed every ob-
ject, and threw false lights upon the
beautiful Gothic architecture. My
lady did not seem in spirits, probably
fatigued by her journey; the boys were
silent, and the girls seemed fearful of
they knew not what; when after crossing
two courts, a large hall, and a long kind
of stone gallery, they arrived at a mag-
nificent room, in which was a comfort-
able fire.

“ You are all welcome to the Abbey,”
said my lord, embracing them; “ and
“ I hope we shall live to spend many
“ cheerful days here; nay I will add
“ years.”

“years.” After some uninteresting conversation they retired to rest.

Mistress Bridget, the young ladies’ waiting-gentlewoman, attended; Bridget herself also was waited on by an old woman who had taken care of the Abbey for many years. “Why do you give
“that good woman the trouble of coming up with you, Bridget?”—“I
“could hardly *see*, I mean *find* my way,
“young lady.”—“But do not keep her
“here,” said miss Harrington, “she
“must be tired; I am sure I am, and
“shall soon be asleep. But where do
“you sleep, Bridget?”—“In the next
“room, young lady.”—“Then send
“this poor woman to rest,” said miss Harrington. “Indeed, my young lady,
“she is not tired; for you know the
“cooks, the housemaids, the pages, the
“butlers, and other servants, have been
“here

“ here these two days, and have got
“ every thing in order ; and this is
“ Goody Dickens, who has been a long
“ while in this place, knows every crick
“ and corner, and is wife to the under
“ gardener.”—“ Then her husband is
“ sitting up for her,” returned miss Har-
rington. “ Goody Dickens, go down ;
“ Bridget has nothing to do but to go
“ to rest ; do go.” The old woman
curtsied, but moved not. “ Indeed,
“ my dear young lady,” said Bridget,
trembling, “ I don’t know how she can
“ go ; do let her sleep this one night
“ with me.”—“ What are you afraid
“ of?”—“ Oh the nuns,” she exclaim-
ed, “ the nuns !”—“ The nuns,” said
miss Harrington, “ have been all dead
“ these hundred years. Now, Bridget,
“ I have a great regard for you ; but
“ if my mother were to know that you
“ mentioned any nonsense of this sort,
“ you

“you would not remain an hour in the
“house.”—“But did not you tell me a
“horrible story of a nun, Goody Dick-
“ens?”—“No,” said the old woman ;
“but I began to tell you a story that
“was told me by my grandmother,
“which I have heard many and many
“a winter’s night ; and as you seemed
“to be sleepy, Mrs. Bridget, I thought
“it might divert you ; but it would take
“a whole summer’s day to make an end
“on’t.”—“I would not hear it, if it
“took but two minutes,” said miss
Harrington, “I am so fatigued ; there-
“fore, good Bridget, do take away the
“candle ; for I believe my sister is
“asleep.” Mrs. Bridget obeyed with
alacrity, and Goody Dickens went with
her.

The next morning, when the family
met at breakfast, mutual inquiries were
made

made how they had rested, which received satisfactory answers. The girls thought the place very dull, and the painted glasses very fine ; the boys wanted a ramble in the park to look about them ; and when breakfast was over my lord and lady were left by themselves. They remained some time silent, my lord thrown back in a chair, and my lady with one elbow upon the table, supporting her head with her hand. The occasion of this silence it would take some time to develope ; my lord was a very clever man, and my lady as clever a woman ; both were good people, and happy in each other ; they had good sense, good education, and were well accomplished in all the elegant amusements of the times ; but they were now thrown out of the path they had been used to pursue ; and that, Courteous Reader, was a very serious affair for a
man

man of forty-five and a woman of forty ; it was, as it were, beginning life over again. Their present situation had not been considered sufficiently ; they had left London because it was disagreeable to them, without drawing any fixed plan for getting rid of time ; the heaviest of all things when you do not know which way to make use of it ; in short, at this moment they were both in a state of abstraction and indecision.

My lord, as has been observed, was a man of letters ; had been highly applauded for his skill at tournaments ; was a soldier when the country was threatened with invasion by the Armada ; and had been an excellent horseman and tennis player ; but his ardour for those exercises was abated, as was also the pleasure of writing verses upon the fair Flostellas

Flostellas of his time; and he sat in silent meditation.

Lady Harrington was well versed in sacred history, and in the history and geography of her own country; had been taught by Isaac Oliver to draw; and was extremely fond of flowers; had read a great deal, and was much employed that way by her royal mistress; she could play too in a very good style upon the lute. How then did it happen that these good people could not set themselves about something?

At length lady Harrington, yawning, and stretching her arms, said, "My dear lord, I wish I had before I left London purchased materials for working a bed."—"Do we want one, my dear?" returned his lordship. "Yes," she replied; "that in the south room is
"very

“very shabby; and the tapestry is so fine, and in such very good condition, that if we had a rich, handsome, worked bed, and a dozen chairs of the same pattern, it would, I think, be the best furnished room in the house.”—“Do you think,” said my lord, “it would be better than the purple velvet with the gold fringe, which king Henry gave to my grandfather?”—“Oh by no means,” replied my lady; “that bed I shall be extremely careful of;” and, rising, added, “I shall go and look at it directly.”

Going into the lobby, she bade the page tell her woman to come to her, and then, recollecting herself, she desired he would send up Vincent the housekeeper. She was consulting with her when she saw her daughters coming towards her, who said they wished to walk in the garden,

garden, as the weather was so fine; and Goody Dickens had told Bridget that it was quite a paradise. "We know how fond you are of bowers and flowers," said Matilda. "Yes," returned lady Harrington, "I am a passionate admirer of those things; but if you and Elizabeth could have an idea of Nonfuch, you would not, I am afraid, have a very magnificent one of goody Dickens's paradise."

It was now the middle of May; the spring had been mild and favourable, and the air extremely soft and perfumed. They went through the great hall into a square court which led to the garden; every thing seemed to smile; the birds sung, and the first thing which caught their attention was an old man weeding a bed of tulips. He said, that his name was Simon Dickens; but he was only under-

under-gardener ; that he had lived in the Abbey many years ; that his father had been head-gardener, but, unluckily for him, died when he was only fourteen years old ; that his mother had been dead twenty years, and himself had married the late lord's under-cook ; he had taken all the pains he could to do right, and hoped his honourable lordship and her honourable ladyship would continue him on ; for he was *so*rely pleased to think he should see the fine old Abbey flourish as it did twenty years ago. Lady Harrington replied, that if she heard a good character of him, she hoped he would. A man now appeared at a distance. " That is *our* gardener, my lady," said Simon. " We want to see the garden," said her ladyship ; " pray show it us." The gardener made his best bow, and preceded them, cap in hand.

The

The garden, though upon a smaller scale, was ornamented with trellis-work, cabinets of verdure, straight walks embowered with trees, in the style of Non-such ; and with flower-beds formed into cyphers. When this was pointed out to lady Harrington, she asked who ordered it. “ *Nobody* ordered, please your ladyship,” returned the man ; “ for my late lord never troubled himself about these things. But when I first came here I heard that the queen thought this part the most pleasant, and sat herself down upon that old bench, which I have done all I could to keep together ; but as the weather has almost demolished it, I made these flower-beds in the form of Q. E. as a memorandum.” — “ It is very well,” said lady Harrington, “ but if it had been E. R. I think it would have been better.” The gardener hoped her

VOL. I. c ladyship

ladyship did not dislike it, as he could make any letters her ladyship chose next year.—No, it would do very well, and she was much pleased to see the garden so well kept up. “My lord,” said he, “ordered, upon the death of his brother, to have every thing kept the same as before; and I have done every thing in my power to obey him.” He then shewed them the kitchen ground and orchard, which were in the same good order; when, desiring some flowers might be sent in, they made the gardener a present, and returned into the house.

Lady Harrington now, throwing herself into a chair, said, “I think, girls, we will turn gardeners.” Oh, they should like it of all things; but how should they get their knowledge? “Why from books; I do not suppose there
“are

“are any in the library; but if you
“remember, Elizabeth, I have a her-
“bal by Gerard, who I believe was a
“physician; and he treats of the cul-
“tivation of plants as well as preparing
“them for medicine. Our books are
“unpacking, and we shall have them
“to-morrow.”—“That is delightful,”
said Matilda; “for we can have trees
“planted by the water, which will pro-
“duce geese.”—“Nonsense,” returned
lady Harrington. “Indeed, madam,”
said Elizabeth, “we took the book out
“of the housekeeper’s room, when she
“had it in London to make medicines
“from, and, looking at the prints, we
“found a tree which bore geese, and
“Matilda read the account; and the
“geese are called barnacles, and they
“grow in Lancashire.”—“A strange
“account this,” replied lady Harring-
ton; “but if we can get trees to pro-
duce

“duce fowls, Matilda, why, so much
“the better; let us now be quiet till
“dinner; for I observed the dial in the
“garden was past eleven when we left
“it, and my lord and your brothers will
“soon return.”

In half an hour my lord and his sons
came in, and dinner was served. “Well
“boys,” said lady Harrington, “how
“have you spent your time?”—“Very
“pleasantly, madam; for we found in
“the park the finest turf to exercise our
“horses upon that can well be imagined,
“and the cleverest spots to shoot at
“the target; there we saw twenty fine
“mares and as many colts; you will
“have plenty of palfreys, sisters; for
“there are several that will suit you
“exactly.”

“I am glad, young gentlemen,” said
Mr. Fairfax, their tutor, “that you like
“the

“ the Abbey; it certainly is a fine place,
“ and I hope to-morrow we shall have a
“ room to begin our studies in.” Robert looked grave, and John chagrined.
“ Very justly observed,” said lord Harrington; “ your mother and myself will
“ this evening appoint one for you. Are
“ your books come, sir ?” Mr. Fairfax answered in the affirmative, and added, that he had been employed in putting them in some order. The young people dispersed after dinner, and towards evening my lord, my lady, and Mr. Fairfax, went over the house; the rooms were magnificent, and the furniture suitable, but old fashioned; in the rooms were scattered some portraits of the family, and remarkable persons; the library was a beautiful room, and well furnished with the best books in Latin and English, down to the thirtieth year of Elizabeth; for the late lord was not

a bookish man. Adjoining the library was a very good room, partly furnished with shelves; this was allotted by my lord as a study for his sons, and orders were given to remove their books under Mr. Fairfax's directions.

Mr. Fairfax had taken his Master of Arts degree at Oxford, was about seven-and-twenty years of age; learned, grave, and saturnine; and perhaps one of the most improper men in the world to conciliate the love of young people. He was destitute of that cheerfulness so agreeable to youth; stern, pedantic, and self-conceited, he spoke little, read old authors much, and ate a great deal more; the two latter indeed seemed to be his only pleasures. He was not in orders, and was rather suspected to be partial to the new sects in government
and

and religion which were springing up in many parts of the kingdom.

Mr. Butler, the vicar of the parish, was his opposite in every respect. He was mild, cheerful, and accommodating, and charitable to the poor in his parish, whom he was ever ready to relieve. He read prayers at the Abbey on Wednesdays and Fridays; and the family from thence always attended him to the parish church on Sundays. He had a wife about his own age, and two daughters who were in their twenty-fifth and twenty-third years. Mrs. Butler, a very good woman, troubled herself little with the world out of her own house, and even there her occupations were not very extensive, her household consisting of only one female servant, and a boy. She was an excellent manager, and understood all culinary matters

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matters as well as any woman for forty miles round the parsonage, as she frequently declared; and, though Mr. Butler's income was small, yet his table was as well furnished as those of his more opulent neighbours. He had already saved five hundred pounds for each of his daughters; had an estate of fifty pounds a-year, which he purchased with his wife's and his own fortune, upon which she was jointured; and, from the value of money at that time, his daughters would be very good fortunes. This brought them many admirers; but, somehow or other, none succeeded. The girls had an idea of marrying gentlemen. Mr. Butler's father had been a merchant in London, and had advanced money to the late lord Harrington, which was part of the present Mr. Butler's fortune. Mrs. Butler was a yeoman's daughter, who farmed his own estate, which was supposed to

to be worth about a hundred pounds a-year. The Miss Butlers, therefore, considered themselves as gentlewomen, on account of their father's profession, added to Mrs. Butler's father having never been in trade. Mr. Butler certainly was a gentleman; his manners ever proved him to be such. Whether his wife or daughters were gentlewomen, must be left to the judgment of the candid perusers of this *elaborate* work.

The young ladies at the Abbey had during the day some private conversation upon what it could possibly be that put poor Bridget into such terror the preceding evening; and they were resolved to hear a little more about it. So when the waiting gentlewoman came as usual to dress them, Miss Matilda said, "Have you heard anything more
" of that horrible story which you men-

“tioned last night?”—“Why I can’t
“say but I have,” replied Bridget;
“and, young lady, from what Goody
“Dickens told me to-day, it made my
“blood run chill in my veins, my hair
“stand on end, and my flesh creep upon
“my bones.”—“What was it about?”—
“About, young lady? all concerning
“the nun of this Abbey.”—“Was she
“murdered?” they both exclaimed at
“the same time. “Why no; from
“what Goody Dickens said, I could not
“make much out about murder; she
“says that her memory fails her, but
“that her husband knows all about it.
“Do, good ladies, let us go into the
“garden in the morning, and hear what
“Simon can tell us; for my lady will
“not, I dare say, be up very early, and
“we may sit comfortably and hear it.”—
“Do, sister,” said Matilda; “let us go
“to queen Elizabeth’s seat and hear
“it.”

“it.”—“Why,” replied the eldest,
“I do not think my mother would ap-
“prove our hearing such things; but
“for once, we will listen to his non-
“sense.”

The morning opened beautiful; every leaf was besprinkled with pearly drops, and the sun brilliantly played upon the tops of the trees. They went into the garden, and seated themselves upon the queen’s bench. Simon Dickens was sent for, and asked if he could not tell them a story of a nun who formerly belonged to the Abbey. He answered, “Yes, my young ladies; but that
“thing happened a *power* of years ago,
“and I don’t think I am quite perfect
“in it; but I will do as well as I
“can.”—“Begin then,” said Elizabeth,
“and make it as short as possible.” He said he would; and, after recollecting
c 6 himself

himself till the patience of his auditors was almost exhausted, began as follows :

“ A long time ago, (it was in the
“ time of the Romans,) a gallant knight,
“ whose name was sir Fier d’Bras,
“ who lived somewhere in this neigh-
“ bourhood, valiantly mounted his
“ courser, girded on his sword, and
“ left all his family crying, and lament-
“ ing the loss of him. He rode up to
“ this Abbey, knocked at the postern
“ gate, and wanted to see the abbess,
“ who, some say, was his aunt, others
“ his niece, and others his sister; but
“ which I can’t tell. Howsoever, she
“ was some how or other his kinf-
“ woman. This lady was one of the
“ best gentlewomen in the world, and
“ very charitable and good to the poor.
“ She gave the knight her benediction,
“ a string

“ a string of beads, and other gifts;
“ with which he rode away very joyful,
“ and went to our king of England,
“ called Lion-hearted Richard, having
“ plucked out the heart of a lion with
“ his own hands. And sir Fier d’Bras
“ went beyond the sea with the king to
“ fight and overcome monsters, though
“ to what part of the world I do not
“ rightly know, but it was all among the
“ blacks.” (“ That must be bad enough
“ of all conscience,” said Bridget; “ for
“ I once saw a picture of one at sir
“ Robert Naunton’s, and it quite over-
“ came me.”) “ But as I was saying,”
added Simon, “ they fought and
“ conquered the blacks, and then went to
“ overpower the Saracens; and after
“ fighting them man to man, and horse
“ to horse, (for the Saracens are good
“ jockeys, as I have heard say,) sir Fier
“ d’Bras found himself just as it was
“ dark,

“dark, and in a parlous cold night, close
“by a wood’s side ; and out of this wood
“came a horrible monster, the most
“horrible monster that ever was beheld
“before or since by mortal man.”—
“That must have been surely the devil,”
exclaimed Bridget. “No, a great deal
“worse,” said the old man.

At that moment they saw lady Harrington approaching, who said, “I am glad
“to see you such early risers. What,
“has Simon been telling you the history
“of my royal mistress’s visit to this
“spot? It will be a favourite seat of
“mine as well as yours, girls ; and I
“hope we shall pass a great many pleasant
“hours here. We can bring our
“work, our music, and our books ;
“here we shall see the flowers of our
“own planting improve daily, and may
“indulge ourselves with the products
“of

“ of the autumn secure from its sultry
“ beams. Come, we will walk once
“ round the flower-garden, and then in
“ to breakfast.”

When they returned to the house, a servant informed them that the books were carried into the library. They, therefore, adjourned as soon as breakfast was over. “ Now, Matilda,” said lady Harrington, “ you may give the books
“ to Giles, and call over their titles, as
“ they are placed upon the shelves.” First,
“ madam, is the Bible and New Testament,—the next Chaucer’s Poems,—
“ Gower’s Works,—Sir Thomas More’s
“ History,—Sir Philip Sidney’s Arcadia,
“ —Spenser’s Fairy Queen,—Shakespeare’s Plays,—Daniel’s Poems,—Davis’s Poems,—Doctor Donne’s Poems,
“ and about a dozen others, which have
“ no letters upon their backs.”—“ Well,”
said

saïd lady Harrington, "it will be good
"employment for Elizabeth to write the
"titles, and for you to paste them,
"another day; but where is our friend
"Gerard?"—"Here he is," saïd Eliza-
beth. "With his barnacle geese, I hope,"
answered Matilda. "You are so fond
"of the wonderful," replied lady Har-
rington, "that I know not what to do
"with you."—"Why, my dear ma-
"dam," saïd the young lady, "do you
"think anybody could make the story?
"Only look in this book, and you will
"find the print, where the geese are
"dropping from the tree into the
"water."—"It may be there," replied
her mother, "yet I have not faith
"enough in Mr. Gerard to believe
"it."—"But is it not very strange,"
saïd Elizabeth, "that so much pains
"should be taken about them? and
"there may be a great many curious
"things

“ things in the world, madam, which
“ are out of our way, and therefore, not
“ seeing them, we are apt not to be-
“ lieve.”—There may be strange things
“ in the world, my dear Elizabeth,”
said lady Harrington, “ but the most
“ unaccountable I have ever met with
“ have been among mankind; for I
“ never found any thing in natural his-
“ tory, for which I could not some-
“ how or other account.”

From this period every thing went on smoothly with this amiable family for four years. My lord inspected the education of his sons, his farms, his hounds, and his stud. My lady that of her daughters, her domestic affairs, and her flowers. The young ladies became no mean proficient in gardening, and their hyacinths, tulips, auriculas, and roses were the admiration of the neighbourhood.

hood. Music and dancing masters came two months every year from London; and the worked bed for the fine tapestry chamber had never been recollected since the first morning of their arrival at the Abbey. They danced and had music (for the young women were tolerable performers upon the lute, and had agreeable voices); the young men rode in the ménage; and the female part of the family had their palfreys, for at that time the luxury of a coach was not common in London, and in the country the roads were impassable for such vehicles. These young people improved in mental and bodily accomplishments. Robert had a good figure, and an animated countenance; possessed a high sense of honour, and seemed inclined to a martial life, but was rather of a grave turn of mind. He had been honoured, since his abode at the Abbey, with letters
from

from prince Henry, the patron and playfellow of his childhood. These letters he hoarded with the same care as a miser does his treasure, and looked forward with impatience to the time when he should attend the prince to the wars.

John was full of spirit, hasty, and passionate ; good and ill tempered in five minutes ; fond of every thing by turns, and steady to nothing ; apt to take fire at what was never meant as an affront ; romantic and rash, and for ever trying if it were possible to break his neck in hunting ; eager to try all things, and never satisfied with any. He was well made, light, and active, and carried himself high and lofty as if he disdained the earth ; but was charitable, and therefore had seldom any money in his purse. A terrible tale of distress drew the tears from his eyes and the cash from his pocket.

ket. His father did every thing in his power to correct his foibles, by setting them in a ludicrous light, the only point in which he was vulnerable. He frequently gave his money to unworthy objects ; yet my lord was in hopes that experience would cure him, and therefore in that respect left him to himself.

Elizabeth was tall and well shaped ; she had good sense too, but it was frequently clouded by foolish fears ; and whether these were constitutional or proceeded from habit, could never be determined. Her countenance was good, and she was allowed to be a very fine young woman.

Matilda was of a different turn, extremely lively, and did not know what personal fear was ; cool, collected, and steadier than could be expected in a girl
of

of her age. She loved all her friends with the warmest affection, and had a good figure, though she was not so graceful as her sister; but, light and airy as the gossamer which floats on the autumnal breeze, she could go through almost any fatigue without suffering from it, as her sister frequently did.

Mrs. Bridget had heard the story of the Nun many times from goody Dickens and her husband, and was frequently teased by her young ladies to tell it; but that she never did; for Simon and his wife could never make her comprehend the main business, as they told it a different way every time, and therefore Mrs. Bridget could never get a clue strong enough to turn it properly about in her own mind, or mould it to any kind of system; on which account she lost the greatest of all possible pleasures,
telling

telling it to others. Not being able to connect the circumstances, however, she gave it up entirely, though it was *one way or other* (she often declared) the best and most moving history she had ever heard in her whole life, but very melancholy and shocking.

One fine October morning, as they were hunting, the deep-mouthed old English hounds had just made the hare break cover from a wood, and they were giving themselves up to the joys of the chase, when Robert saw a man who looked like a courier riding towards the Abbey, and, as he came nearer, strike into the path which led immediately to it. The scent lying breast-high, the chase and his companions had left him, and curiosity prompted Robert to inquire into this man's business: He therefore spurred his horse after him, and heard the messenger

messenger found his horn at the Abbey-gate. Now he reflected that perhaps prince Henry had sent for him to attend him to the wars. If so (thought he) the time is come for me to be perfectly happy ; my joy is unbounded at the idea ; it must be so, or why—

He came up to the man, and asked him whence he came. “ From court, “ with a packet from the king to the “ lord Harrington.”—“ Nothing for “ me,” asked Robert eagerly. “ No, “ my noble master, but bad news for “ England, and you too.”—“ What,” said Robert, “ are the Spaniards coming “ with another Armada ?”—“ Not so, “ my noble master ; but prince Henry, “ the gallant prince Henry, is dead.”—“ Dead ! how ? when ? where ? Tell “ me this moment.”—“ Some say, sir, “ he was killed in a tournament ; others, “ that

“ that he received a hurt there which
“ he never recovered ; others again say,
“ that the violent exercise threw him
“ into a fever ; and there are those who
“ will say he did not come by his death
“ fairly.” — “ Good heaven !” exclaimed Robert “ what a day for England !” —
“ This packet,” said the messenger,
“ must be delivered to my lord your
“ father immediately. I must only rest
“ my horse a few hours, and set forwards
“ for London again.”

Robert drooped ; his legs could scarcely support him to his own apartment, where he could not help exclaiming,
“ Oh my prince, my adored master !
“ why, for the good of England, was I
“ not taken, and you blessed with long
“ life ? what a fatal day for my country !
“ but why do I put such an insignificant
“ being as myself in comparison with
“ you ?

“you ? My father would have mourned
“me, my mother, my brother, and my
“sisters ; but the grief would have gone
“no farther than this little spot, where
“the Abbey stands.” He then threw
himself upon the bed, and burst into
tears.

When lord Harrington returned from
hunting, he found that the packet con-
tained an order for him to attend the
court, with a note from the king to the
same purport. My lord was surprised,
as he had for many years found himself
neglected by his sovereign. My lady
was amazed, and wished to know why
he was sent for. Elizabeth apprehended
it foreboded no good to her father. Ma-
tilda did not think at all upon the sub-
ject, as she saw her mother had no fears ;
but John was mad to go with him, and
most terribly mortified at his refusal.

The next morning was fixed for his setting out towards London; and preparations were immediately ordered for that purpose.

In the evening my lord was in a deep reverie.—“What can be the reason,” my dear lord,” said lady Harrington, “of this summons to court?”—“Perhaps,” replied my lord coolly, “the king, knowing that I was formerly engaged in a military life, may think to honour me with some employment; for I have heard that the Spaniards seemed inclined to be insolent of late.”—“But do you,” returned my lady, “think that insolence can warm the cold blood of king James? No, nothing but open violence can force him into a war; and what would have been the fate of England if the royal Elizabeth had been

“ been of the same pusillanimous dis-
“ position? Her politics were quite dif-
“ ferent; the nation at large was not then
“ like a standing pool, which breeds a
“ thousand noxious insects. Are not
“ the minds of men fixed upon new
“ sects in religion, new forms of govern-
“ ment, new every thing? and what
“ are the causes, but ease and affluence?
“ The people’s minds must be exer-
“ cised; and those who wish for inno-
“ vation, either in church or state, in a
“ constitution firmly established by the
“ wisdom of our ancestors, whether that
“ wish proceed from the throne or the
“ people, are in my opinion equally
“ wrong. But in times when we are
“ upon our mettle, the brave and good
“ will come forward, and the sneaking
“ fellow, who would be sapping the
“ very foundation of our glorious con-
“ stitution in a profound peace, will be
“ kept

“kept quiet by the sound of the drum
“and the trumpet.”

“Upon my word, Isabella,” said my lord, “you are a profound politician; “and I vote for your going to court “instead of me. But, to tell you my “thoughts seriously, if an armament is “going out, and I am offered any share “in the command, I shall decline it; “it is not proper for a man no longer “young, and who has been laid upon “the shelf, to trouble himself. No, “let those who are my juniors take it; “but, if you have no objection, I will “offer my son John to his majesty; it “may tame him.”—“I hope it will,” replied my lady; “and I could wish “that any friend of yours, who is a “rigid disciplinarian, would take him; “he would then be kept within due “bounds, and prevented from encoun- “tering ideal dragons and monsters.”

The

The next day my lord pursued his journey, and lady Harrington began to think of her eldest son, who had been absent at breakfast. Finding, upon enquiry, that he had not left his room, she had too much feeling not to let him indulge his grief; having found by experience, that notwithstanding it is a dreadful disorder of the mind, it is one of that kind which cures itself; and she therefore offered no present consolation.

Mr. Butler, who had read prayers at the Abbey chapel that day, returning to the parsonage through the park, saw Robert sitting at the foot of an extremely old pollard ash; and as it has been observed, that it was the month of October, the venerable tree had just lost its leaves; Robert looked as melancholy as its fallen honours which were strewed around him. Mr. Butler saw and approached him. "Ah, my good
D 3 "friend,"

“friend,” said Robert, “you do not
“know what a loss I have sustained; you
“cannot imagine what I at this moment
“suffer. Prince Henry—” here he burst
into tears. “The Prince, sir,” replied
Mr. Butler, “is certainly happy. I have
“been ever out of the way of courts
“and princes; but yet I feel the loss of
“prince Henry as of a good man, and
“one who, in all probability, would have
“made a great king. The whole
“nation spoke well of him, and he is
“therefore a general loss. But you
“know, that this life is only a state of
“probation: if you do not, Mr. Fair-
“fax has taught and I have preached
“in vain.”—“Mention not Fairfax,”
said he sharply: “he hates kings
“and kingly government.”—“Then
“he is not what I took him for,” re-
turned Mr. Butler; “but this is not
“to our present purpose; I could wish
“to

“to console you, by representing that
“the prince is, if you have a proper
“idea of what our religion teaches, in
“a situation to be envied. The pangs
“of death are past with him; and if it
“be possible for prince Henry to look
“down upon this sublunary world, he
“will pity our frailty in lamenting him.
“He is happy, and above the care of
“mortals.”—“My good sir,” returned
Robert, “what you say is perfectly
“right; but could you practice what
“you now enforce?”—“I would cer-
“tainly endeavour, sir.”—“But have
“you had any trials?”—“Why, if you
“will allow the loss of a son at eigh-
“teen, and a daughter at seventeen,
“who were dutiful and obedient, to be
“such, I have. They were long sicken-
“ing, I might say dying; a consump-
“tion was the complaint, and I saw
“them decline gradually as the sun sets
“in

“ in a fine evening. But go with me,
“ Mr. Harrington, and I will shew you
“ the seedling carnations and auriculas
“ which I have been privately nursing
“ for my lady. I hope to surprize her
“ next year with some beautiful flowers;
“ I have some plants too for your sisters;
“ and I wish to shew you a fine young
“ horse, four years old, and three colts.

The animals were much admired by the young man. “ I am greatly obliged
“ to my good lord your father,” said Mr. Butler; “ and I wish to lay myself
“ under some obligations to his son:
“ I therefore request it as a favour, that
“ you will take one of them; gratify
“ an old man’s wishes, my good sir.”
Robert hesitated, and then chose a three year old colt.

Robert gradually regained his cheerfulness, and followed his amusements and studies.

studies. The family had not heard any thing from my lord, except that he was well; the young people began to be extremely anxious; lady Harrington not so much so. She certainly wished to know the purport of the journey; but yet considered, that it might not be proper to trust it to writing; messengers might be curious, or bribed by those who were so. Restrained by these considerations, she waited patiently.

Robert was fond of reading aloud, and read well. Being one evening in the library, the ladies at their work, and John making fishing tackle, he said, "We have finished the Fairy Queen; shall we read sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia?"—"He is a great favourite of mine," replied lady Harrington, "and will, I am sure, entertain your sisters." He took down the book,

and found written upon a blank leaf,
This book is a gift from Matilda Devereux, to her dear friend, Isabella Markham.—"Pray, madam, who was this
"Matilda Devereux?"—"A dear
"friend of my youth," answered lady
Harrington, "and one whom I have
"lamented many years."—"Is she
"dead, madam?" asked Elizabeth.
"That I cannot tell, but will inform
"you what I know of her history.

"Mr. Robert Devereux (afterwards
"the famous Earl of Essex), when a
"very young man, chose to marry
"privately a beautiful young woman of
"the name of Browne, who was a rela-
"tion of lord Montacute's. Lord Essex,
"his father, knew nothing of this wed-
"ding; and they had been married but
"a twelvemonth when his wife died in
"childbed of my friend Matilda De-
"reux.

“reux: Old lord Essex was a friend
“and patron of my father’s, and we
“lived in Suffex in his neighbourhood.
“Mr. Devereux came one day, in the
“greatest distress imaginable, revealed
“the secret, and informed my father
“that his wife had just expired at a
“farm-house about twenty miles dis-
“tant; but that the people did not
“know him, as he had taken a fictitious
“name. My father was a man who
“melted at a tale of woe; he was agi-
“tated beyond measure; he could not
“for some time recollect himself or tell
“how to act. At length he said, “Are
“you married, sir?”—“To prove that
“I am,” said the young man, “here
“is the certificate of my marriage; take
“and preserve it.” Then falling into
“an agony of grief, he exclaimed,
“Oh my Matilda! never can I see you
“more. I fear that you did not taste
“one hour’s happiness during the short
“period

“ period you were the wife of the un-
“ fortunate Devereux ! Tell me what
“ I should do, sir John.” — “ Think of
“ your daughter, sir,” replied my father.
“ Remember I am really your friend.
“ First let me go and see the funeral
“ rites performed ; and three days
“ hence meet me in the wood at the end
“ of lord Montacute’s park. Return
“ to your father, and let me conjure you
“ to inform him of it.” He promised,
“ nay almost swore, that he would break
“ it to lord Essex, and blessed my father
“ for the friendly part he was about to
“ take in his affairs.

“ My father went to the farm-house,
“ where he saw, in the dead form of
“ Matilda Devereux, all that was elegant.
“ Her features were fixed, not in me-
“ lancholy, but in grief. My father melt-
“ ed at the violent impressions which
“ sorrow

“ sorrow had marked in her counte-
“ nance.

“ The funeral was ordered; and he
“ gave the farmer to understand that
“ she was the daughter of a friend of his,
“ and had married against her father’s
“ consent; that her relations, of the name
“ of Browne, lived in Northumberland;
“ that the gentleman’s connexions lived
“ in the same county, and he believed
“ that he was a distant relation of lord
“ Effex, for his name was Devereux.

“ The farmer’s wife lamented the loss
“ of the lady; but said, that she could
“ not help suspecting, as she was so given
“ to crying and taking on, that she was
“ *not* the gentleman’s wife. But she
“ was so meek that it melted her very
“ soul to see her so unhappy; that she
“ had inquired all about those parts, and
“ her

“ her neighbours had done the same ;
“ that she was vastly rejoiced that things
“ were as they should be, for if she had
“ got an ill name by harbouring those
“ who were not so good as they ought
“ to be, she could never have shewn
“ her face at market nor fair again ; for
“ she and her husband had well to live,
“ and had kept up a good name for thir-
“ ty years together, the whole time they
“ had been married ; and it would have
“ been a parlous thing to have lost it at
“ last. Besides, her neighbours had not
“ stuck at giving her some items of the
“ matter ; they had said plainly enough
“ what they thought ; but now that it
“ was fairly come out, she could look
“ the best of them in the face again.
“ My father assured her she might ; for
“ he had the certificate of the marriage
“ in his pocket. The good woman
“ could not read ; she saw it, however,
“ and was satisfied.

“ My

“ My father attended the poor lady
“ to the grave ; but before her inter-
“ ment wrote her history upon parch-
“ ment, inclosed it in a little box and
“ put it in the coffin. To conciliate
“ matters still farther with the farmer’s
“ wife, he gave her great part of the
“ wearing apparel, and prevailed upon
“ her to keep the little Matilda at a cer-
“ tain stipend per week, and the pro-
“ mise of a present when he should take
“ her away, if she was healthy. He told
“ her his name and place of abode ; and
“ the next Sunday one of her sons came
“ on foot, and inquired if that was one
“ fir John Markham’s house,—to be
“ sure that all was right.

“ The next day fir John went to the
“ wood and met Mr. Devereux, who
“ had not informed his father of the
“ marriage ; nor could he go to lord
“ Mon-

“Montacute. He was ungovernable,
“and all but mad. My father, there-
“fore, was obliged to go alone, and was
“admitted. He told the story just as
“it was, and lord Montacute seemed not
“at all pleased with the affair. “I am
“surprised, sir John Markham,” said my
“lord, “that you should trouble your-
“self or me concerning such a business;
“surely lord Essex was the properest
“person.”—“Your lordship,” returned
“my father, “must well know, that lord
“Essex is a very rigid man, and has not
“much compassion for the sufferings
“of others.”—“So am I, sir, to those
“who act wrong. The father of the
“young woman was, I believe, related
“to me; he was an officer, under lord
“Essexham, and was killed in one of
“the engagements with the Armada.”
“Surely, my lord,” returned my father,
“the daughter of a brave officer ought
“not

“not to be neglected, even if she had
“married a son of lord Effex. Do, my
“good lord, give countenance to your
“family.”—“Why, sir John, I do not
“know in this case how I can counte-
“nance them. You know how much
“I dislike the Devereuxes; and I will
“not look upon the woman at all; she
“might have consulted me before the
“marriage; but when two hare-brained
“young people choose to commit folly,
“they wish to palm themselves upon
“their relations. No, let her starve,
“and torment me no more about it.”—
“Your lordship forgets,” returned my
“father, “that I informed you the
“young lady, your relation, was dead,
“and I think happily released from a
“world of misery.”—“Why then this
“long story, sir John?”—“My lord,”
“replied my father, “what I have said
“was to procure protection for her in-
“fant.

“fant daughter.”—“I will not protect—I will not countenance, one drop of the blood of a Devereux; and I dare say that lord Essex is of the same opinion in regard to mine.”—“Then,” said my father, “both yours and lord Essex’s blood shall find a protector in me.”—“Do you mean to insult me, sir John; perhaps, I may find a time—”—“At any time,” replied my father, “your lordship may find me. John Markham wears a sword to guard the innocent, and to protect himself from insult.” He then turned upon his heel, and left the room.

“My father mounted his horse in great wrath; and when he arrived, he found the son of Essex had left the wood. This displeased him much, as he had eighteen miles to travel before he reached his home. My father was
“an

“ an honest good man, and lived with
“ great hospitality ; but he was not rich,
“ for he spent his income.—Riding on,
“ and ruminating, prudence suggested,
“ that if the infant he had sworn to pro-
“ tect should be entirely deserted by its
“ family, he was injuring his own chil-
“ dren by taking it into his house ; and
“ he reasoned thus :—I have four
“ children, and may have as many
“ more ; ought I then to take one who
“ has no claim upon me ? surely I can-
“ not justify myself in so doing.—He
“ stopped his horse, and the servant rode
“ up to him, thinking he wanted his
“ cloak. This circumstance broke the
“ thread of his reflections ; and he again
“ jogged on, almost without any reflec-
“ tion at all. At length certain fine
“ feelings, by which those who are poor
“ are tormented just as much as those
“ who are rich, burst upon him.

“ By

“By heaven,” he exclaimed, “it shall
“be so. Why do I let such thoughts
“enter my mind? What, shall not
“John Markham do that which his
“heart in its first emotions, in its natural
“simplicity, told him was right? I will
“protect the child, perhaps adopt her:
“Providence has provided for me;
“helpless innocence, therefore, has
“claims upon me, and those claims
“shall be answered.” He then put his
“horse upon a canter, and thought of
“nothing but reaching home, journey-
“ing with a heart as light as that of a
“boy of fifteen.

“When my father returned, my mo-
“ther was gone out, and sir John
“was extremely impatient to entertain
“her with the history of his journey.
“My mother soon came in, and being
“as eager to hear as he was to relate,
“they

“ they both drew close to a table. My
“ father went through his narrative with-
“ out one interruption from my mother,
“ and then said, “ Well, have I done
“ right, my dear Isabella?”—“ Perfectly
“ so,” replied my mother; “ the
“ child will be a companion for our
“ daughter, as there are only a few
“ months difference; therefore, my dear
“ sir John, the sooner we get it home the
“ better.”—“ It is too young to bring
“ so far on horseback, Isabella.”—
“ Not at all,” answered my mother;
“ for, if you remember, sir Henry
“ West’s child was carried forty miles
“ in one day when it was but ten days
“ old.”—“ Well, after a month I will
“ send for it.”—“ I will go myself, sir
“ John; the old easy pad shall be led;
“ the child and the nurse can come very
“ well, and with a great deal of ease.”
“ My father assented to this plan.”

I must

I must here inform my readers, that lady Markham could see about twenty times as far as sir John; for she never went a step upon this earth without considering the aspect of the heavens; she ascertained which way the wind set at her first going out, reflected upon every point to which it was possible for it to veer; and had what was proper to be done in such a case always ready.

Sir John, on the contrary, would set forth, without thinking of the matter; and if the wind set full in his teeth, it was just the same to him; for he scorned to take shelter of a hedge or a tree, or go a foot out of his way to prevent being wet through. Some have ill-naturedly enough said, he was so short-sighted, that he could not see an advantage; and others, that
if

if by chance he saw one now and then, he could not be brought to consider it as any advantage at all.

Lady Markham was as attentive as could be wished to sir John's story; yet at the same time she was turning and tumbling over in her mind all the advantages and disadvantages of the business; and upon maturely weighing them, the former seemed to preponderate; for instance, lord Essex was a strange man, but he was rich; he had been and might be again a friend to sir John; and suppose for his interference in this business my lord should break with him, yet he could not undo what he had done, which was getting them a grant of church lands, that at present (for want of money to improve them) were let for very little. Mr. Devereux would not

forſake his child, the child of a woman he ſo tenderly loved; and he would in all probability outlive his father, would then be very rich, and of courſe generous.

“My mother,” reſumed lady Harrington, “arranged the nurſery to receive
“the little ſtranger, and in ten days ſet
“out to bring it home. The child was
“found in perfect health; the farmer’s
“wife was very liberal of her curteſies
“and compliments upon the occaſion,
“and declared that ſhe never ſaw a
“ſweeter or better-natured creature in
“all her born days; that ſhe had got
“a nice young woman as a wet nurſe,
“who was ſo fond of it, that ſhe wiſhed
“to keep it everlaſtingly; and ſhe hoped
“her ladyſhip, and ſhe was ſure her
“honourable ladyſhip, would take care
“of it; for half the country talked of
“nothing

“ nothing but of her ladyship’s goodness;
“ and, what everybody said must be
“ true.

“ My mother arrived safely with the
“ little Matilda, and was well pleased
“ with her charge, concerning whom she
“ indulged in the most delightful re-
“ veries. But my father was uneasy;
“ he had neither seen nor heard from
“ Mr. Devereux, and after many inquiries
“ resolved to go to lord Essex. He
“ ordered his horse repeatedly for that
“ purpose; my mother as often dissuad-
“ ed him, as she was in hopes lord Essex
“ might call, as he frequently did; and,
“ as some people have strange ideas that
“ they can do better than their neigh-
“ bours, she wished to see him herself.
“ My mother was a very sensible
“ woman, and concluded that what she
“ might say would be better taken, as

“ my father was very apt to be extreme-
“ ly abrupt in his conversation.

“ One day, my father being absent
“ upon business, lord Effex called, and
“ my mother then wished him at home ;
“ for, when it came to the point, she did
“ not like the business. Lord Effex in-
“ quired very kindly after my father,
“ and said he would dine with them, as
“ my mother assured his lordship that she
“ expected him home. Though he did
“ not return, my lord did not seem at
“ all displeased at his absence, but sat
“ down to dinner with my mother, and
“ afterwards desired to see the children.
“ They were brought, when, fixing his
“ eyes upon the little Matilda, he said,
“ Upon my word, lady Markham, that
“ child strikes me as being very like my
“ son when he was at that age.” As
“ soon as the servants were withdrawn,
“ my

“ my mother, who was rather confused
“ at the observation, took courage, and
“ said, “ Lord Effex, that child has claims
“ upon your goodness ; it is your grand-
“ child.” — “ Impossible !” said my lord ;
“ for I am sure, lady Markham, you
“ would not receive my son’s natural
“ child into your house.” — “ True, my
“ lord,” returned my mother ; “ but that
“ is your grandchild by your son’s wife.
“ I have wished to have this secret re-
“ vealed to you, because I think it ought
“ not to be kept as such from you.” —
“ Why was it, madam ? My son must
“ have disgraced himself, or I should
“ have heard of it ; and I do not take
“ it well of you and sir John to foster
“ this child in your house. If my son
“ could do wrong, I should have hoped
“ that my friends would not have en-
“ couraged him. But who was the
“ mother of this child ? Some low-born
“ woman, I suppose.” — “ No,” return-
“ ed

“ed my mother, “her father, captain
“ Browne, was a relation of lord Mon-
“ tacute’s. He was an officer under
“ lord Effingham, and was killed at sea
“ in an engagement with the Spaniards.”
“ Lord Montacute is my bitterest ene-
“ my !” exclaimed lord Effex.—“ And
“ her’s too,” rejoined my mother.
“ The unhappy lady died soon after
“ her daughter beheld the light. Lord
“ Montacute refuses to acknowledge
“ this child, and will not allow that it can
“ have any claims upon him.”—“ He
“ is right,” said Effex ; “ for if *he* would,
“ *I* would not.”—“ She was born at
“ a farm-house,” said my mother ;
“ your son came here almost distracted
“ at the death of his wife ; and two
“ months since I brought away the child
“ to protect it, expecting that Mr. De-
“ vereux would have informed your
“ lordship, which was the reason sir
“ John

“ John did not ; but hearing nothing
“ from him, I thought it right to give
“ you this information.”

“ And pray, my good lady, in what
“ light is this child considered in your
“ family at present ?”—“ As a distant
“ relation of mine, till your lordship
“ should be informed of the event.”

“ Lord Essex seemed totally absorbed
“ in thought for some time, and then
“ said to my mother, not without hesita-
“ tion, “ I feel myself much obliged to
“ you, lady Markham, and to sir John,
“ for your care and attention to my
“ family ; but I must——I must see my
“ son before I can determine upon any
“ thing. For the present, give the
“ infant, my good madam, your protec-
“ tion, and you shall hear farther from
“ me.” Then, seeming to recollect
“ himself,

“ himself, “ my friend sir John has with
“ his usual good-nature and hospitality
“ taken the child into his house, who
“ I am sure must be in want of many
“ things I am unacquainted with. There-
“ fore, permit me, lady Markham, to
“ leave this (taking out his purse) ;
“ and if you will expend it for the child’s
“ use, you will be laying me under new
“ obligations.” He then made, a formal
“ bow and left the room.

“ My mother examined the purse, and
“ found that it contained fifty marks. As
“ she was ruminating upon this event,
“ my father came in, and she informed
“ him of the visit. “ I am glad of it
“ with all my heart (rubbing his hands) ;
“ I am happy that it is over ; now
“ every thing will go on well ; but I
“ was much afraid, from the violence
“ and severity of my lord’s temper,
“ that he would have flown out and dis-
“ owned

“owned the poor thing.”—“He has
“not acknowledged her,” replied my
“mother. “Why,” returned my fa-
“ther, “did not you tell me he
“thought her like his son, before he
“could even guess who she was?”—
“Yes,” replied my mother. “And
“did he not thank us for what we had
“done to serve the child, and has he not
“left a purse of money, and wished us
“to take care of it?”—“All this I ad-
“mit, my dear sir John; but I saw
“nothing melting about his eyes when
“he was told that the infant was his
“grand-daughter, though he seemed
“gratified when I informed him that she
“was known in this family only as a re-
“lation of mine.”—“Depend upon it,”
“returned my father, “he only wants
“to have some conversation with his son
“about it. I am sure my old friend and
E 4 “patron

“patron will not do that which is not
“perfectly right.” My mother had
“doubts upon the subject:

“In a few days my father received a
“note from lord Effex, stating that he
“wished to see him. He obeyed the
“summons; “I wished to see you, sir
“John,” said his lordship; “but how
“am I to thank or repay you and lady
“Markham for your kindness?”—
“My lord,” returned my father, “our
“obligations to you are such that the
“debt must ever remain on my side.”—
“I have been thinking upon this affair a
“great deal,” said lord Effex, “and I
“have seen my son with less resentment
“than I thought it possible for me to
“feel upon so trying an occasion. You
“must imagine, that an only son’s
“marrying, as he has done, while yet
“a mere boy, and into a family with
“which,

“ which, you know, sir, I was never upon
“ good terms, must be a very disagree-
“ able circumstance.” — “ Very true,”
“ replied my father; “ and I hope, if
“ any of my sons were to do the like, I
“ should, from your lordship’s good ex-
“ ample, be reconciled just in the same
“ manner. But I own myself rather
“ void of consideration when my blood
“ is agitated by what I do not like.”

“ We are all men and not angels,”
“ replied his lordship; “ but you know
“ I am burthened with another child as
“ it were; and my son is so young, that
“ I do not like the world at present
“ should be made acquainted with the
“ folly of a boy just setting out in life.
“ He is now at the court, and I have
“ prevailed upon him to have it kept
“ secret, provided lady Markham will
“ continue her patronage; and I have
“ given

“given him my honour to provide for
“its support and education in a liberal
“manner, till he is in a proper situation
“to acknowledge her as his daughter.”
“—“Do not think about that,” said
“my father; “she shall be treated
“like my own daughter; and as to
“education, it will be some time before
“she will want any thing of that sort.”

“After dinner my lord seemed in
“perfect good-humour; and they were
“extremely happy. He entertained
“my father with many pleasant adventures he had met with in his travels;
“particularly of a famous physician
“that he saw at Padua, who had recovered him from a most deplorable
“state of health. He was thought to
“be dying several times; but by the
“care and attention of his good friend
“the doctor he was perfectly cured.
“This

“ This man, my dear fir, was the most
“ wonderful creature in the world ; for
“ he looked nature through ; and used
“ to say, that every family had a tem-
“ perament peculiar to themselves ;
“ what was good for one, therefore,
“ was hurtful to another ; so skilful was
“ he in making discriminations of the
“ various constitutions of mankind. He
“ studied mine so well, my dear friend,
“ that he gave me a powder which
“ would always agree with a Devereux.
“ And, fir John, as there is another of
“ us come into the world, and I have the
“ greatest affection for her, as every man
“ ought to have for his race, I will give
“ you a little box of it to present to lady
“ Markham for the use of our Matilda.
“ My son was a very sickly weak child,
“ and his mother found it of the greatest
“ use to him.” Then getting up, and
“ taking out of a cabinet a little gold
E 6 “ box,

“box, he said, “Give this, my good
“friend, to lady Markham, and explain
“its uses.”

“My father received the box, and
“took his leave. He was extremely
“rejoiced at the reception my lord had
“given him, and delivered the box,
“with a history of its virtues, to my
“mother.

“Mr. Devereux remained at court;
“but he wrote frequently to my mother,
“and his letters were filled with expres-
“sions of love and tenderness for his little
“Matilda, and thanks to sir John and
“lady Markham for their care and
“attention, accompanied by presents,
“which at that time might not be very
“convenient to him, as he had only a
“certain stipend from his father, who,
“to give him his due, paid liberally for
“the

“ the protection Matilda received from
“ us. Mr. Devereux had a generous
“ soul, and his letters always expressed
“ a concern, that his father confined
“ him so closely to the court, that it was
“ impossible for him to see his daughter,
“ who was the object nearest his heart;
“ and from this we understood that my
“ lord did not wish him to see her.

“ The little Matilda and myself, even
“ at five years old, were great friends.
“ About this time she was taken ill,
“ though not dangerously. My mother
“ began to think of the sympathetic
“ powder, which was to cure all the
“ blood of all the Devereuxes. She
“ examined the box, and found that
“ it was a composition of red roses
“ dried and powdered, but she could
“ plainly discover some other ingredi-
“ ent. Sympathetic powders, and such
“ trash,

“ trash, were very much the fashion
“ of that time. My mother was a
“ great physician, a good apothecary,
“ and a tolerable surgeon ; but, unfor-
“ tunately, had no opinion of cures
“ being performed by sympathetic
“ powders. She would never take her-
“ self, nor permit her family to take,
“ any medicine, but what she was per-
“ fectly acquainted with ; and had there-
“ fore an inclination to try these powders
“ upon some brute before she ventured
“ even with the blood of a Devereux.

“ Going up stairs, and reflecting upon
“ this subject, she met a cat, took up the
“ animal, put it into a closet, chopped
“ up some meat with the sympathetic
“ powder, gave it to the cat and left it.
“ The next morning, upon opening the
“ door, she was extremely surpris'd at
“ finding the creature dead, and appa-
“ rently

“rently poisoned. The agonies of her
“mind were so extreme, that human
“nature could not support it, and she had
“a severe fit of illness; but as she was
“determined not to make others miser-
“able, she kept the secret. Having
“sometime after given a portion of the
“powder to other animals, with the
“same effect, she in a rage threw the
“remainder into the fire, and compos-
“ing another mixture, as like it as pos-
“sible, of dried roses and white chalk,
“she put it into the little gold box.

“Mr. Devereux was now abroad;
“but before he went had got into high
“favour with the queen. He had only
“one opportunity of seeing his daughter,
“but was wonderfully pleased with her
“person, and the good account my
“mother gave of her. He left us, per-
“fectly satisfied with her situation, and
“declaring

“ declaring that the only regret he felt
“ was at the unaccountable dislike his
“ father had conceived against her being
“ acknowledged. Yet he flattered him-
“ self *that* prejudice would have an end,
“ as his lordship seemed extremely fond
“ of her.

“ For my own part, I thought Ma-
“ tilda an angel. We were the sincerest
“ friends in the world, and aptly an-
“ swered the description Shakspeare has
“ given in his *Midsummer Night's*
“ *Dream* :

———We, Hermia,
Have with our needs created both one flower,
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
Both warbling of one song, both in one key ;
As if our hands, our sides, voices and minds,
Had been incorporate : so we grew together,
Like to a double cherry seeming parted ;
But yet a union in partition.

“ I was

“ I was nearly one year her senior,
“ but could not compare with her either
“ in personal charms or mental accom-
“ plishments. When she was about
“ thirteen, Matilda fell ill with a fever-
“ ish complaint, lost her appetite, and
“ looked very badly. Lord Essex came,
“ observed it, and said to my mother,
“ This child looks unwell ; what is the
“ matter with her ? ” — “ I think she is
“ feverish my lord. ” — “ And what do
“ you give her, lady Markham ? ” —
“ Milk, whey, and strawberries. ”

“ I should imagine, madam, ” replied
“ my lord, “ that the Devereux powder
“ must be a good thing ; indeed, I am
“ sure it is ; for my family have had
“ numberless trials of it ; I have taken
“ a great deal myself, and you know
“ what an uninterrupted good state of
“ health I have enjoyed for many years. ”
“ I can have no other objection to giv-
“ ing

“ing it to Matilda, my lord, than think-
“ing that it will be thrown away upon
“so light a complaint. So valuable a
“medicine should be reserved for a case
“of extreme danger.”—“I have a
“large store of it, my good lady, and
“am so very unhappy at seeing Matilda
“look so ill, that I beg some of it may
“be given to her immediately.”

“My mother took out the powder
“and gave a dose to Matilda, narrowly
“watching my lord at the same time ;
“then said carelessly to me, “Ifabella,
“go with Matilda ; she had better lie
“down, and do you stay with her. A
“confidential old nurse was in the room ;
“and my mother, seeing my lord visibly
“change countenance, kept the old
“woman about her till she saw him ready
“to faint. She then screamed aloud,
“sent nurse for all the people she could
“get together ; and as soon as three
“or

" or four came, exclaimed, " See, lord
 " Essex is in a fit ; he will die ; for hea-
 " ven's sake, nurse ! give me the pre-
 " cious Devereux powder in the gold
 " box ! "

" The domestics held him in vain ;
 " he cried for mercy, and made re-
 " sistance. My mother mixed up the
 " dose, which they forced down his
 " throat. He was then laid upon a
 " bed in the next room, all the servants
 " dismissed, except the nurse, and my
 " mother sat calmly down by the bed-
 " side to watch him. After a few
 " minutes profound silence, he said,
 " For God's sake, lady Markham, send
 " away your attendant ; as a dying man
 " I request it." My mother did so ; and
 " he spoke to her as follows :

" You see before you, lady Mark-
 " ham, a wretch who has been the cause
 " of

“ of his own dissolution, and at the same
“ time the death of an innocent creature
“ who never offended him. I feel, ma-
“ dam, a lassitude and faintness; my
“ eyes have almost lost their faculty—I
“ am leaving this world—that powder
“ was poison——Adieu!”

“ My mother screamed aloud, ran
“ into the next room, and hurried nurse
“ to the physic closet, who soon return-
“ ed, laden with gallipots, phials, and
“ boxes. My mother mixed up a nau-
“ seous draught with syrup of poppies,
“ which he took immediately. She then
“ said very gravely, “ What I have now
“ given you, my lord, is, I am persuad-
“ ed, an antidote, that will take off
“ the ill effects of what you have swal-
“ lowed, were it the most subtile poison
“ in the world.—It is a precious medi-
“ cine, and was given to my mother by
“ a monk. It was never wanted in this
“ house

“house before, and I hope never to have
“occasion to try its virtues again.—But
“I have now found your reasons for not
“wishing to acknowledge Matilda as
“your grand-daughter; you do not wish
“her to live. As her father has placed
“her here, however, you may be sure
“that I will give her protection, even
“at the hazard of my own life; and I
“am almost sorry that I have endeavour-
“ed to preserve yours. [*He groaned.*]
“My care for your soul’s happiness has
“made me wish to save you, that this
“awful circumstance may hereafter pro-
“duce justice and repentance.

“The world, my dear lady Mark-
“ham, the world——”—“How can
“you mention the world at this time, my
“lord? Is this a moment for such trifles?
“Repent of your crimes, and the secret
“will be for ever locked up in this
“breast.”

“My

“ My best friend, my preserver ! but
“ will not the servants think all this
“ bustle strange ? ” — “ I can account for
“ that,” said my mother, “ by telling
“ nurse a story of sympathetic powder,
“ which she will not understand ; and
“ she will tell to others what they can-
“ not comprehend. Therefore, my lord,
“ you may rest secure from them ; thank
“ Providence for having preserved the
“ innocent child, and compose yourself
“ to sleep.” He would try. The dose
“ of poppies soon had the desired effect,
“ and he forgot the world.

“ My lord slept soundly four or five
“ hours, and when he awaked sent for
“ my mother, who inquired after his
“ health. — “ I can hardly tell you,
“ madam ; I have slept, it is true ; but
“ my dreams have been horrible, and
“ my imagination busily employed.” —
“ Well, I hope,” returned my mother.
“ How

“How is that possible, lady Markham!
“but I will try, I will endeavour,
“madam.”—“Endeavour at present,
“my lord, to rise; it will refresh you;
“I will send your servant, and then at-
“tend you in the drawing-room.” In
“half an hour my lord entered, but ap-
“peared faint and weak. Matilda and
“I were in the room, and he considered
“her very attentively. After paying
“our compliments, my mother observed
“that the air would do Matilda good,
“and sent us into the park.

“My mother spoke very firmly to
“lord Essex.—“It is surely your lord-
“ship’s duty to acknowledge Matilda as
“your grand-daughter; to settle some-
“thing upon her, and to do, my lord,
“what in fact you ought.”

“That child, madam, has been a
“trouble to me ever since it was born.

“It

“ It stands in the way of my son’s fortune;
“ and at present, my good lady, I am
“ very unable to think about it.”—
“ This,” returned my mother, “ is the
“ properest time that could possibly pre-
“ sent itself; for sir John will not re-
“ turn this evening, and we shall meet
“ with no interruption. Your son is
“ abroad; life, at best, is held by a very
“ precarious tenure. Acknowledge Ma-
“ tilda’s relationship. In what way,
“ my lord, can it possibly disgrace you?
“ Your principal estates are settled upon
“ a distant heir male if your son should
“ have none. I must, my lord, have
“ something done for Matilda.”

“ Is not the allowance I make her
“ sufficient, madam? if it be not, I
“ am willing to double it.”—“ You pay
“ liberally, my lord; but that is not per-
“ manent; and the affection I bear the
“ dear

“ dear girl makes me think of every
“ thing I can for her benefit.”—“ Well,
“ madam,” said he peevishly, “ what
“ would satisfy your friendship ?”—
“ Your full acknowledgment of your
“ son’s marriage, because I wish for
“ justice.”

“ I will not do that,” he replied in a
“ rage. “ I would not do it for the
“ world. What, the blood of a Monta-
“ cute to be acknowledged by Essex !
“ No, madam.”

“ What would the blood of the Mon-
“ tacutes think of this day’s transaction ?”
“ returned my mother. “ But come,
“ my lord, I am a woman of honour,
“ and you shall find me so. Here is pen,
“ ink, and paper ; give me under your
“ hand a settlement to Matilda of five
“ hundred pounds a-year upon your estate

“that is not entailed.”—“I cannot
“write, madam, my mind is so relaxed,
“that I am entirely unfit for such busi-
“ness at present.”—“I am sorry to
“distress you, my lord, upon such an
“occasion; but will you permit *me* to
“take the pen?” He nodded assent,
“and she wrote an obligation from him
“to Matilda Devereux, giving her five
“hundred pounds a-year in land, to
“commence immediately after his death;
“and this he very reluctantly signed.
“At the same time my mother told
“him, that she must have it properly
“executed upon parchment. Neither
“did she forget to put in the words
“*Matilda Devereux, my grand-daughter.*

“My mother told the nurse a long
“complex story about sympathetic
“powders; and the first opportunity
“after she had received the intelligence,
“she

"she drew the whole household around
 "her, in which were included lord Essex's
 "servants. The old woman opened her
 "oration by telling them of a wonderful
 "powder that my lord had brought from
 "beyond sea, which was contrived by a
 "conjuror on purpose for the family of
 "Devereux; that her lady, not exactly
 "knowing its virtues, had given a little
 "of it to her kinswoman Miss Matilda,
 "and that the virtue of the medicine,
 "not agreeing with her, had flown out
 "of her blood into lord Essex's, and if
 "they had not given him a good dose in
 "the nick of time to operate properly,
 "he would first have gone mad and then
 "died. They stared, made their separate
 "comments, and told it with additions
 "and improvements in their own way
 "to their several acquaintance.

"My father returned next day, and
 "was extremely distressed by the ac-
 "counting "

“count given him by the servant who
“took his horse; but till he got into
“the house, he could not make out
“what was the matter. My mother
“then told him, in the presence of lord
“Essex, that it was a fainting-fit which
“had alarmed them exceedingly; and
“his lordship declared he was perfectly
“recovered, thanks to lady Markham’s
“good nursing.

“Two years passed with little or no
“variation; my mother entertained cer-
“tain opinions respecting lord Essex,
“but those she chose to confine to her
“own breast. Matilda improved daily;
“her good-nature, cheerfulness, wit,
“vivacity, and beauty made her the
“darling of our family; my father per-
“ceived that his eldest son was extremely
“partial to her; and, as a man of ho-
“nour, thought better to check it, con-
“sidering

"sidering Matilda as the grand-daughter
 "of his friend, and at the same time
 "recollecting the difference of their
 "rank and probable fortune. My bro-
 "ther shewing an inclination for the
 "army, lord Essex procured him a
 "subaltern's commission, and he was sent
 "to the Low Countries, where he was
 "cut off before Zutphen at the age of
 "nineteen. We were all much affected
 "by this loss, and it was a considerable
 "time before my father recovered his
 "spirits. Matilda was greatly concern-
 "ed, though ignorant of the true mo-
 "tive of his being a soldier. "Ah, my
 "dear Isabella!" she said in an agony
 "of grief, "your William, your dear
 "William is gone! I loved him with
 "the affection of a sister; what can I do
 "now, but transfer that friendship to you
 "and my dear lady Markham, as the
 "only friends I have in the world!"—

"What, is not my father your friend?"

"Yes, your father is a very sincere

"friend to me; but I have not that ar-

"dent affection for him which I feel for

"lady Markham and you."

"Lord Essex grew very infirm, and

"very morose; the deed was executed

"upon parchment in all its proper

"forms, and he gave it to my mother;

"who just looked in it to see that the

"sum specified was right, and went to

"her cabinet to give him the other;

"but the key was lost; and she sent

"for a person to break it open. My

"lord said, it was of no consequence; he

"should fetch her again soon, and would

"then receive the paper. The next

"day the key was found; my mother

"sent a special messenger with the deed,

"and, as she was at leisure, thought

"proper to read it before she deposited

"it."

"What?"

"it."

“ it in her cabinet. She found all she
“ wished, except the insertion of Matilda
“ Devereux *my relation*, instead of
“ Matilda Devereux *my grand-daughter*.
“ I was with her in the room, and she
“ was so provoked, that she vented her
“ anger aloud, termed him a villain, and
“ determined to prove her power over
“ him by having it inserted exactly as
“ she thought proper.

“ But, alas, what are all our schemes
“ in this world ! fleeting as the clouds
“ which are continually passing over our
“ heads. Lord Essex grew worse ; my
“ father saw him a day or two before he
“ expired, and when he came home
“ told my mother that he was sure
“ my lord was fit for a better world.
“ She shook her head. “ He is,” said
“ my father, “ if repentance and con-
“ trition are right ; and we are taught
“ from

“from our earliest infancy to be-
“lieve they are so. But one thing
“puzzles me, Isabella, extremely:
“what can it be that affects him so
“much? I have known him many
“years; I knew him to be haughty and
“imperious; yet I ever knew him just,
“generous, and charitable. What,
“therefore, can affect him? He always
“seemed to me to have more virtues
“and fewer vices than any man I was
“ever acquainted with.”—“It is im-
“possible for you to guess, my dear sir
“John; he may have some undivulged
“crimes; and, though a man may live
“an atheist, yet he can never die one.
“Lord Essex was particularly cautious
“about entering into conversations in
“which religion had any thing to do;
“I never heard him touch upon the
“subject more than twice; and he seem-
“ed

“ed to have very little, which made
“him particularly disagreeable to me.”

“I have thought,” replied my father,
“particularly within these few years,
“notwithstanding that he has ever been
“liberal of his money to Matilda, and
“made you so many handsome pre-
“sents —” Here a servant entered
“with a letter, which informed them
“that lord Essex was dead, and that the
“steward wished to see my father, as
“the young lord was absent. My fa-
“ther went to the castle ; he was con-
“sulted about and attended the funeral,
“and wrote an account of my lord’s
“decease to his son.

“My mother opened the melancholy
“affair of her grandfather’s death to
“Matilda, soothed, consoled, and com-
“forted her ; and then expressed great
“joy

“ joy in the hope she had, of soon seeing
“ her in a proper situation, by her father’s
“ arrival in England, who would, no
“ doubt, shew her to the world as his
“ daughter, and not (as my mother
“ expressed herself) the distant relation
“ of sir John Markham’s wife. Ma-
“ tilda had been some years informed
“ of her birth and consequence in the
“ world; but, contrary to my mother’s
“ wishes, her spirits were depressed
“ whenever she conversed about her
“ fortune and situation; and when my
“ mother was holding up high birth,
“ great wealth, and their attendant con-
“ sequences, she would sigh and say,
“ My dear madam, how can I be hap-
“ pier than I am at present? I would
“ rather be a distant relation of yours
“ than a duchess, provided I had a
“ little fortune to prevent my being bur-
“ densome to you. I have now that
“ fortune ;

“fortune; so far my wishes are an-
“swered; and you and my dear Isabella
“are the comforts of my life. I have
“now every thing that I can either want
“or wish.”

“Content, my dear Matilda,” replied
“my mother, “is the greatest blessing
“this world can give; and when we
“have health and competence, a palace
“or a cottage will be much the same
“thing. But why should a young wo-
“man like you despise what all the
“world sets a value upon?” — “Be-
“cause, my dear madam, I am now
“happy, and every step I might take
“towards greatness would, I think,
“make me less so.”

“Lord Effex returned; and the
“pleasing sound of *lady Matilda* vibrat-
“ed in my mother’s ears; but she dared

“ not make use of the appellation with-
“ out the earl’s leave. After paying his
“ duty to the queen, he came to my fa-
“ ther’s, and found his daughter one of
“ the most beautiful young women in
“ the world, and possessed of that cer-
“ tain elegance and grace which attracts
“ everybody and which nobody can
“ define. — Lord Essex was wonderfully
“ pleased with her, and told my mother
“ that it would be the pride of his life
“ to introduce her at court ; but added,
“ I am upon such terms with my royal
“ mistress at present, that my having
“ been married might not be agreeable
“ to her. Therefore, Matilda, if you
“ are happy with these good friends, fir
“ John and lady Markham, stay with
“ them ; or I will send you to lady
“ Coniers, who is a distant relation of
“ lady Markham’s, who knows you only
“ as such ; and nothing farther would I
“ have

" have known at present, though I hope
" soon to take you into the world, with
" all the splendor that should accompany
" the beloved daughter of Essex."

" My father did not survive this
" period more than a year, I believe.
" The death of his friend lord Essex
" hastened his. We remained in the
" family-house, as my elder brother was
" not married, and the younger was at
" college, being intended for the church.
" The younger children's fortunes were
" small; my mother had a gentle-
" woman's jointure; Matilda lived with
" us, and we did extremely well. Lord
" Essex was generous, nay liberal in the
" extreme. My mother hoarded up
" the income of her jointure every year;
" and lord Essex was perpetually mak-
" ing Matilda magnificent presents of
" jewels, telling her at the same time,
" that

“ that she would soon want them on the
“ occasion of her introduction at court.
“ But he was too much involved in poli-
“ tics and business to attend to this after-
“ wards, though he had a great ascend-
“ ancy over the queen.

“ He called one day, and told my
“ mother that he was come to steal me
“ away; that one of the maids of ho-
“ nour was married, and the queen had
“ been graciously pleased to nominate
“ me to the honour of succeeding her.
“ My mother was in raptures at this
“ event, though it was not so with Ma-
“ tilda and myself; but when we found
“ my mother considered this appoint-
“ ment so very advantageous to me, we
“ gave it up; and my lord promised to
“ intercede with the queen to permit
“ me to spend one month in the year
“ with my mother, in which he suc-
“ ceeded, and I went to court, counting
“ the

“ the months, weeks, and days, to the
 “ time which was to bring the happy
 “ period that I should pass with them.

“ I supported my situation with satisf-
 “ faction to my royal mistress, and saw
 “ my mother and Matilda every year in
 “ the month of August.

“ The times now grew boisterous;
 “ Essex courted popularity, and was
 “ blamed and applauded as people’s
 “ minds suggested : at length his fate was
 “ decided, and that all-accomplished
 “ nobleman was beheaded. This blow
 “ was terrible to Matilda ; she had now
 “ no father, no protector. He had ever
 “ expressed great affection for her, and
 “ had given her a number of jewels,
 “ but nothing farther ; and it was happy
 “ for her, that my mother had got the
 “ settlement. As the estate was in
 “ other

“ other hands, my mother was the only
 “ person she had to look up to.”

“ Matilda had been addressed by
 “ many young men of family and for-
 “ tune; but her father had entertained
 “ such high hopes of himself, that he
 “ rejected them all through my mother,
 “ as not one of them considered her
 “ otherwise than as her relation. The
 “ world supposed that Essex certainly
 “ flattered himself the queen would
 “ marry him. What a change at last!
 “ The Devereux estate went to a distant
 “ relation; and he had supported his
 “ dignity in such a princely manner,
 “ that his personals did not quite pay
 “ his debts. He was an ambitious,
 “ proud, uncertain man, fond of po-
 “ pularity and the applause of the mul-
 “ titude; and that was his ruin. His
 “ person was remarkably handsome and
 “ dignified;

“ dignified ; but there was no depend-
“ ing upon him ; he did not possess .
“ true dignity of soul ; for what is every
“ natural grace or acquired accomplish-
“ ment, without that honourable firm-
“ ness which distinguishes a noble from
“ a common mind ?

“ My mother lamented lord Essex
“ extremely, on account of my bro-
“ thers ; and in all probability, had he
“ lived, he would have been either the
“ raising or ruin of them. She had used
“ all her art, by frequent writing and
“ conversations, to keep up his atten-
“ tion to the promises he had given
“ her.—She also interested herself so
“ much in Matilda’s affairs, that the
“ world began to say, that she was lord
“ Essex’s natural daughter ; and they
“ talked so freely upon the subject, that
“ my mother wished to set them right
“ by

“ by producing the certificate of the
 “ marriage; but Matilda would not
 “ permit it. “ What does it signify,”
 she would say, “ whose daughter I am,
 “ when I have you for my friend, my
 “ more than mother? I am satisfied,
 “ my dear lady Markham; I have a
 “ competency, and what could the world
 “ give me? No, no; the world would
 “ give me nothing, in all probability, but
 “ reflections upon the fate of my father.”
 —“ My dear Matilda, the world ought
 “ to give, and will give lady Matilda
 “ Devereux her due; and I hope to
 “ convince you that I am right.”

“ I went at the usual time to pass the
 “ happy month with my mother and my
 “ friends, and found, to my great grief,
 “ the former very much broken. From
 “ a remarkably spirited active woman,
 “ she was become low and dull; and
 “ neglected

“ neglected her affairs. It was with dif-
“ ficulty we could persuade her to walk
“ in an orchard, once a favourite place,
“ and where she had been making im-
“ provements for some years; in short,
“ she seemed not long for this world.
“ One day, as we were sitting together;
“ and I was endeavouring to entertain
“ her with the history and anecdotes of
“ the court, which she used to be fond
“ of hearing, she stopped me by saying,
“ My dear Isabella, I have something
“ to say to you and Matilda; if you love
“ your mother, attend.—I feel as if I
“ were not permitted to remain long
“ with you.—My strength decreases,
“ like dew before the sun.—Let me, if
“ time will admit, talk seriously to you
“ both.—I have, Isabella, saved some
“ money, which I have equally divided
“ between you and Thomas. Henry
“ inherits my jointure; and I wish he
“ were

“were married, that this house might be
“a proper asylum for my dear Matilda.
“A single woman, like you, always
“wants a protector.—But when I am
“gone, my relation, lady Coniers, will
“receive you into her family; and if
“you will take the advice of a sincere
“and a parting friend, permit Isabella to
“have the care of your papers, and the
“certificate of your mother’s marriage,
“as I am sure her affection for you will
“preserve them as treasures.—And
“now, my dear children, I have done
“with this world.”—We wished to
“send for my brothers. “No,” she
“said, “it would flurry them and me
“too.—I have been good for nothing
“for some time, and it will be a happi-
“ness to lay me down to rest.—Take
“out of my cabinet the papers which
“belong to Matilda; those do not con-
“cern my sons; and remember the dying
“injunctions

"injunctions of your mother, to keep
"them safe."

"The exertion she made occasioned
"her to faint. We hoped it would be
"soon over, and that she would be
"better; we thought she began to re-
"vive, when suddenly, fixing her eyes
"upon us, she pressed our hands and
"expired.—Our affliction and surprise
"were unbounded; we could not believe
"what had happened; for she had not
"been what might be called ill. It is
"true, for a few weeks she drooped,
"and seemed dispirited; but she was
"only sixty, and was a year back
"much more active than many women
"of thirty.—The activity of her mind,
"I believe, impaired her strength, and
"her constitution could no longer sup-
"port that mental labour which she so
"many years exerted.

"I wrote

“ I wrote to lady Coniers to inform
“ her of my mother’s request; and she
“ seemed much pleased at the thoughts
“ of receiving Matilda into her house.
“ I was not much acquainted with her,
“ but I thought myself happy in having
“ my friend fixed in a respectable family.
“ The only circumstance which gave
“ me pain was, that they lived at a
“ greater distance from the court than
“ my mother; yet I had hopes that my
“ royal mistress would permit me to
“ pay my annual visit to lady Coniers,
“ who had given me a pressing invita-
“ tion to that effect.—Matilda kept her
“ jewels, and I carried her parchments
“ with me to the court.

“ The following autumn the queen
“ graciously gave me leave to visit Ma-
“ tilda, which journey I performed with
“ a light heart, and was received by her
“ with

“ with pleasure. When I arrived,
“ the lady of the house was absent for
“ two days. — I settled my stewardship
“ with Matilda for the year. As the
“ estate lay in a distant county, I
“ was obliged to prove my right to re-
“ ceive the rents, and had employed an
“ agent in town for that purpose. — We
“ passed the days of lady Coniers’ ab-
“ sence in the most delightful manner,
“ rambling through the woods, and
“ sitting and conversing upon the banks
“ in the corn fields, as the season was
“ extremely fine, and the corn ripe. In
“ the course of our conversations I ex-
“ pressed a hope that she was happy in
“ lady Coniers’ society. — “ As happy
“ as I can be, my dear Isabella, now our
“ good mother is no more; but she was
“ a superior being, lady Coniers is a
“ common one, and therefore not so
“ attractive to your friend. I have no
“ dislike

“ dislike to lady Coniers ; but she does
“ not seem to have many fine feelings
“ about her, and is not very anxious
“ whether she pleases or not. — But she
“ does not offend, and leaves me to do
“ every thing I like, except one, and I
“ am very well contented. I wish you
“ would marry, Isabella, that I might
“ live with you.” — “ Pray indulge my
“ curiosity, and inform me what that
“ *one* thing is which is disagreeable to
“ you.” — “ A trifle ; she encourages
“ her son to make love to me, and the
“ education she has given him is not so
“ good by a great deal as that which he
“ gives his dog or his horse. This is a
“ mere trifle ; I believe the young man
“ has a good heart, and might have gone
“ through life very well had he been
“ properly brought up ; for I never saw
“ any thing vicious about him.” — I
“ wished

“wished her joy of the conquest, and
“hoped to see the conquered.

—“Lady Coniers was a widow of forty-
“five; a very well-looking woman;
“said she was ten years younger than
“was really the truth; dressed well;
“kept a good table, and had been laying
“snares for the heart of an old lord, her
“neighbour, for five years, without
“being tired; had a great deal of dress,
“and what is called cleverness.

“She received me very politely, and
“introduced me to her son, who said,
“Faith, cousin, you are a fine girl
“enough; but no more like my dear
“Matilda than an apple is like an
“oyster.” — “As an apple is not like
“an oyster in any shape,” I replied,
“I take it for granted, that we are both
“charming in our way.” — “No, you
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“are not so handsome as Matilda; there
“is as much difference between you as
“there is between mother Huggins’s
“market horse and Lofly my hunter.”—
“And which do you prefer, Lofly or
“Matilda?” — “Why, Matilda in this
“room, and Lofly when the hounds are
“out; you must be a great fool not to
“guess at that; but I find you could not,
“with all your wit from court.” —
“You are remarkably polite, Mr. Co-
“niers,” I returned, “and so full of
“flashes of wit, that the people at court
“could not withstand you ten minutes.”
“But they shall,” he replied, “for I
“am to go there soon, to get the old
“woman to lay the sword across my
“shoulder, and then I shall be as good
“a knight as the best of them.” —
“You must go to the wars as soon as
“you receive the honour of knighthood,
“to try your sword and your spurs.” —
“My

" My spurs I have often tried in a long
 " chase." — " I do not doubt it ; but if
 " by your behaviour you do not do cre-
 " dit to your knighthood, the queen's
 " cook will have the employment of
 " cutting them off." — " You are talk-
 " ing, my dear cousin, of what William
 " knows nothing about." — " But he
 " may in time," said lady Coniers.

" I was one day lamenting to lady
 " Coniers, that Matilda had not the ad-
 " vantages which her birth demanded ;
 " for you know, lady Coniers, who she
 " is." — " Oh, yes, very well, my dear ;
 " she was daughter to the old lord
 " Essex." — " No, madam," I returned,
 " she was daughter to that unfortunate
 " nobleman Robert earl of Essex." —
 " No such thing, child ; you are wonder-
 " fully mistaken." — " I am not, ma-
 " dam ; my mother had the certificate

“ of their marriage ; you know he married Matilda Browne, a relation of lord Montacute’s, who died soon after Matilda was born.”

“ You are certainly mad, my dear,” returned her ladyship ; “ she was daughter to the old lord Essex, and I know you to be a very clever discreet young woman ; nay, I have heard people who are much about the court say, that the queen has expressed as much. — But I am to-blame, Isabella ; I ought to keep that secret to myself ; yet it concerns you ; — but it shall die with me ; for I do not think it altogether right to divulge the folly, not to say wickedness, of our relations.”

“ I was extremely surpris’d. “ For heaven’s sake, madam, what can you mean ? ” — “ Why, my meaning is, “ what

“ what every body has known for
“ years.” — “ Do, tell me, my dear
“ lady Coniers; for you make me
“ miserable at I know not what.”

“ Well then, if you must know, I will
“ inform you. The young woman in
“ this house is not the legitimate daugh-
“ ter of the earl of Essex. No such
“ thing; Matilda is the daughter of the
“ old lord, and her mother was yours;
“ all the world suspected it; and you
“ know how very kind he was to your
“ family; what presents he made them,
“ and was for ever making to you all.
“ Your mother, dear cousin, when she
“ found herself declining, poor woman,
“ shewed me the settlement that lord
“ Essex made upon Matilda, and I
“ could see plain enough, by his terming
“ her his relation, that the world was
“ right.

“right. Lady Markham, your mother,
“my dear, was certainly a clever wo-
“man, and managed this business well,
“for which I give her unbounded cre-
“dit; for if she had not, your father
“would have been burthened with ano-
“ther child, which would not have been
“very convenient to him; for he was
“neither very rich nor very prudent,
“poor man! but your mother kept
“every thing cleverly together; and this
“was the only folly I ever heard of her
“committing, and I don’t doubt but
“she was very much in pocket by it.”

“At the end of this speech, I arose
“out of my chair; stamped about the
“room like a mad woman; reviled
“her in the bitterest terms possible;
“vowed it was all a fabrication of her
“own, and called down vengeance upon
“her for daring to utter such a falsehood
“against

“ against the characters of people who
“ were not alive to defend themselves.
“ I told her, that I had in my possession
“ the certificate of earl Essex’s marriage
“ with Matilda Browne ; and, in short,
“ I was so much agitated, as nearly to
“ faint : a friendly flood of tears relieved
“ me, and when I was a little recover-
“ ed, I proceeded thus :

“ If you *think*, lady Coniers, as you
“ *say* ; if you really believed Matilda to
“ be lord Essex’s natural daughter, would
“ you wish your only son to marry her ?
“ No ; with his great fortune, you would
“ certainly have him connected with
“ some young woman of high birth ;
“ and from my soul I believe that the
“ chief reason for your wishing him to
“ marry her, is, your full assurance that
“ she is the daughter of the earl of Essex
“ and Matilda Browne ; and you would,

“were the wife to your son, mould
“something out of it. — This is my
“opinion of you.”

“She replied very coolly, “My
“dear Isabella, you are quite in hero-
“icks, and I expect every minute to see
“some valorous knight, mounted upon
“a flying courser, come to your rescue;
“but compose yourself. When these
“things have been whispered about,
“which I assure you they have been
“very much, I have ever defended
“my cousin Markham to the last word,
“and always took particular care to ob-
“viate every thing which could be urged
“against her; and I do not doubt but
“the world thinks me a fool to allow
“my son, who is so much superior in
“fortune, and of a family as good as
“hers, to think of marrying her, who
“ever

“ever she may have sprung from. But,
“to convince you that I wish my dear
“cousin to be entirely exculpated from
“the charge laid against her, do send me
“the certificate of the marriage, (which
“shall be safely returned,) that I may
“shew it to those who think evil of
“her; for that will effectually convince
“them, and they will no longer dis-
“honour her memory.”

“No, madam,” I returned; “my
“mother was virtuous; — my mother
“never defamed her neighbours; — my
“mother, lady Coniers, never dared
“say a thing which was not true, — nor
“do a thing she dared not justify. —
“And the certificate I will keep myself.
“A time may come when it will proba-
“bly be of the first consequence to my
“friend.”

“ I then stalked out of the room ;
“ and as I passed along the gallery,
“ Matilda met me. I was disturbed,
“ and she wanted much to know the
“ cause. I told her, that I had been
“ talking with lady Coniers about my
“ mother, whose memory was so dear
“ to me ; that my situation in life
“ preventing me from seeing those who
“ knew her, and were acquainted with
“ her virtues, my spirits were therefore
“ much agitated by the conversa-
“ tion I had had with lady Coniers:
“ Another cause of disquiet proceeded
“ from my time being almost expired ;
“ for I was obliged to attend the court
“ in a few days. I conjured her, when
“ she found her situation disagreeable,
“ to inform me of it, and I would get
“ protection for her in some family near
“ London ; requested she would take
“ her money affairs into her own hands,
“ which she declined, but lamented the
“ trouble

“trouble I met with on her account.
 “I departed next morning, very ill satis-
 “fied with lady Coniers, and contrived
 “plans during my journey to get Ma-
 “tilda out of her house if possible.

“About a month after, I saw young
 “Coniers at court; he was knighted,
 “and became sir William. He gave
 “me a letter from Matilda; said he
 “hoped the air of the court had sweet-
 “ened me, for I was as sour as a crab
 “in the country; told me that he was
 “going to Ireland to see his estates, and
 “wondered, when he wanted to give
 “me a hearty shake of the hand, that I
 “was so shy. His conversation made
 “those about us laugh; and I must con-
 “fess that I was not much delighted with
 “my cousin.

“Six months elapsed, and I heard
“nothing from Matilda. I sent a special
“messenger, who returned with a note
“from lady Coniers, saying, that she
“was come to town to me. I petition-
“ed to go down to her, which was
“granted. Lady Coniers told me, that
“Matilda had left the house in a clandes-
“tine manner about two months after I
“went. “I know (said her ladyship)
“she is very fond of my son; so pro-
“bably, Isabella, she has followed him
“to Ireland. Her servant Mary went
“with her; she took two of her horses,
“leaving the third and her man servant
“behind her; and you cannot imagine,
“my dear Isabella, what a pretty piece
“of gossiping this has occasioned in the
“neighbourhood. I assure you, that
“could I have had the smallest idea of
“what sort of a person she was, my house
“should not have been open to her.”

“What

“What excuse did she make for going, madam?” — “None in the world; she had been at lady Corbet’s, as I understand, and rode off with Mary while the servants were at supper; and I have not heard of her since.” — “What is become of her jewels, madam?” — “Jewels! I never knew she had any.” — “A great many very valuable ones, given her by her father.” — “She kept them very snug then; for I never saw her wear any worth five pounds.” I told her that they must be worth five thousand, and had cost twice the sum. — “Then she has taken them with her; but, my dear Isabella, do look at her clothes, and let them be bundled up, and taken away; for I should detest the sight of them, or any thing else which belonged to such a creature.” — “Perhaps,” I said, “that creature is by
“ this

“this time your daughter-in-law.” —
“No, no ; my son knows better than
“to marry a runaway.”

“The wardrobe was examined in
“lady Coniers’ presence, but nothing
“was found of any value, except her
“clothes, books, and music ; all which
“I sent to my apartments in London ;
“settled every little pecuniary matter
“with my *dear* cousin, and parted
“friends.

“I was not acquainted with lady
“Corbet, and therefore it was an awk-
“ward thing for me to call upon her ;
“but I was resolved to do it, and she
“received me with a great deal of po-
“liteness ; she knew little of the affair,
“and said there must be some mystery
“in it ; that lady Coniers had taken
“great pains to declare that Matilda was
“gone

“ gone to town to pay me a visit : “ and,
“ my dear madam, if she had gone
“ to you when that low-bred fellow sir
“ William Coniers was making love to
“ her, we should not have been at all
“ surpris’d. Her going a day or two
“ after him gave rise to suspicions that
“ she was gone to him. She seem’d to
“ be unhappy, lost that agreeable cheer-
“ fulness for which she was remark-
“ able, and grew pale and solitary ; in
“ short, she put me in mind of Shake-
“ speare’s beautiful description of a wo-
“ man in love :

“ She sat like Patience on a monument

“ Smiling at grief.”

“ I know her disposition, lady Cor-
“ bet,” said I, “ her patience, her
“ fine feelings ; and Coniers is a hand-
“ some young man, and a man without
“ vice ;

“vice; if she had liked him, why not
“marry? there was nothing to prevent
“her; and I am convinced, that it must
“have been something very extraordi-
“nary which induced her to take this
“step.” I took leave of the friendly
“lady Corbet, who promised that if she
“heard the slightest circumstance re-
“specting Matilda, she would inform
“me of it. Nothing transpired; but
“lady Corbet wrote to me, and said,
“that lady Coniers had been very in-
“dustrious in telling all her acquaint-
“ance that Matilda had followed her
“son to Ireland. She could not say
“she liked the girl; but if he were such
“a fool as to marry, she believed she
“could not forget that he was her son;
“for the workings of maternal tender-
“ness were so strong in her breast, that
“there was no resisting them. She had
“made up her mind to every thing, for
“her

" her happiness was wrapped up in his.
 " As to Isabella Markham, she only
 " wished the queen knew what kind of
 " person she was; but the dreadful un-
 " happiness of people in her majesty's
 " situation was, that every body about
 " them wore a mask, which they never
 " took off but when at a distance from
 " court; and then they could unblush-
 " ingly take their friends jewels to set
 " off their persons, and, she did not
 " make a doubt, keep them for ever as
 " their own.

" Happily, this story was sometimes
 " told unguardedly to those who were
 " frequently at court, and to some who
 " had offices there. Lady Coniers was
 " likewise so well known in her neigh-
 " bourhood, that the good people seldom
 " attended much to her when she did
 " speak the truth; fortunately too, I
 " was

“ was not rich enough to purchase jewels,
 “ and therefore was never seen to wear
 “ any; for my mother prudently turned
 “ the few she was possessed of into
 “ money, which she divided between
 “ my younger brother and myself.

“ A period of, I believe, twenty years
 “ has slipped away, and I have never
 “ heard of my dear Matilda Devereux.
 “ She did not go to Ireland, as I could
 “ learn from my inquiries; neither did
 “ she marry Sir William Coniers. —
 “ Her rents I have regularly received,
 “ and hoarded up the money. If I
 “ should ever see her again, there it is
 “ for her; or, when I am assured of her
 “ death, I will pay it into the hands of
 “ Mr. Devereux, her nearest relation as
 “ to blood; for I think I informed you
 “ that the Devereux’s estate went to a
 “ very distant relation. The title fell
 “ with

“with her father, and was given to the
“family of Capel.

“You may suppose, my dear children,
“that the greatest pleasure I could enjoy
“would be to find the friend of my
“youth alive, virtuous, and happy. Yet
“I dare not flatter myself that such an
“event can be possible. Sir Philip
“Sidney’s *Arcadia* was one of the ele-
“gant presents she made me when we
“lived so happily together; and now
“that my narrative is ended, let us hear
“it; for it will entertain you, and be
“gratifying to me.”

Robert began reading, and they all
attended for three hours, when other
avocations called upon them. — Time
wore slowly away, in expectation of
hearing from my lord; a few days
brought a special messenger to say,
that

that queen Anne of Denmark was dead, and the king in great affliction; that a party had been raised in favour of lady Arabella Stuart, whom they wanted for their queen; that lady Arabella had written a letter to the king, and discovered the plot; that affairs were a little quieted; but that he should not be able to fix any time for returning to his family, which he much lamented.

After dinner the family were conversing with Mr. Butler and Mr. Fairfax upon these events, and the former was expatiating upon the miseries of a country when the people at large thought wrong, and the dreadful mischiefs which must in that case fall upon every individual; when Mr. Fairfax took occasion to observe, that it would not matter if they were to rise; for it was very likely we might do better without any parliament.

parliament. The house of lords was certainly an incumbrance, and the nation would undoubtedly be better without them. And as to kings, what were they? nothing. — “Sir,” replied Mr. Butler, “there have been kings ever “since the creation of the world; you “will find I am correct in what I advance, if you will consult your bible.” — “It may be so, sir,” returned Mr. Fairfax; “but the world, sir, is more “enlightened; it is grown wiser, and “will improve every day; for we have “gone on so long in the old track, that “it is time to open a new one; and I “think I can see the change approaching.”

Lady Harrington inclined her head on one side, as if she doubted her powers of hearing; and at last, being out of patience

patience with such doctrines, spoke to him firmly, but without passion :

“ Mr. Fairfax, I am surprised, and
“ can hardly credit what I have just
“ heard you utter. If these were your
“ principles, why did you enter this
“ house? you have not learnt them
“ here.”—“ No, madam,” he replied,
“ I brought them with me.”—“ Then,
“ I beg, sir, you will take them back
“ again. I find your head is turned ;
“ you are mad in one point ; that settled
“ gloom which I have ever observed
“ hang over you, and which your coun-
“ tenance and manner were unable to
“ conceal, was the gloom of discontent ;
“ you embrace new doctrines in hope
“ to be advanced in the world. If you
“ had taken orders, my lord might pro-
“ bably have been of some service to
“ you ;

“you; but I do not doubt [*looking at*
 “*Mr. Butler*] that he will find proper
 “subjects for his church-preferment.
 “I have this opinion of my family, that
 “the improper notions you choose to
 “cherish have had no ill effect upon
 “them; though you came here, I sup-
 “pose, as a missionary to convert us to
 “the new light. So far I am happy,
 “that you have enlightened me to wish
 “to part with you.—You shall receive
 “from me whatever is due; and as the
 “last favour, I request you will depart
 “from the Abbey this evening.” The
 money was paid, and Fairfax walked off
 without a bow.

“I did not think there could be such
 “a man in the world,” said Elizabeth;
 “what can he mean?” — “Is he not
 “drunk?” asked Matilda. “No,” re-
 plied lady Harrington, “not with wine;
 “but

“ but intoxicated with a much stronger
“ thing, ambition. That man, were he
“ a prebendary would be miserable till
“ he should be a dean, and then unhappy
“ till he became archbishop of Canter-
“ bury. As a layman, he would wish
“ to govern nations, and would rule
“ them with a rod of iron. When dis-
“ content lays its strong talons upon the
“ minds of men, it is seldom removed
“ but with life; it preys upon their
“ happiness, like the grub at the root of
“ a plant; and nothing but taking it
“ up, cutting out the affected part, and
“ replanting it in another soil, can give
“ any chance for a cure.” — “ But do
“ you think, my dear madam,” said
Robert, “ that it could be so replanted?”
— “ I am not quite sure that it could;
“ yet for instance, if the king were to
“ send for him, compliment his abilities,
“ give him an office of emolument, and

“ add titles to those honours, he would
 “ think the present the best times that
 “ could happen. But when he found
 “ the difficulty of filling his situation
 “ with dignity, and that his time and his
 “ ease must be entirely given up to
 “ public business, he would be fatigued ;
 “ he would become a tyrant to those
 “ below him ; he would find that his
 “ former habits of life made his present
 “ situation more uneasy ; his mind would
 “ again sicken at finding the misery of
 “ what he was, and at the same time
 “ be too weak to return to what he had
 “ been. It is not in the nature of such
 “ minds to be satisfied.”

Lady Harrington questioned her sons,
 whether they were acquainted with Mr.
 Fairfax's principles. The eldest said,
 that at first Mr. Fairfax did not speak
 out, and therefore he did not com-
 VOL. I. H prehend

prehend him; when he did, he told that gentleman that he was sure those ideas were opposite to every thing his father wished him to learn; and he thought himself that Virgil and Horace were much pleasanter studies than such subjects. “And what did you say to him, John?”—“Why, I told him that he was mad, and burst into a laugh, which made him angry; he would then call me a dunce, and tell me to go out of the room, which was precisely what I wanted.”

The following week a messenger arrived from lord Harrington, to say, that the king had appointed lady Harrington to be governess to the princess Elizabeth; that he was engaging proper people to be sent down to get the east front of the Abbey in order for her royal highness's reception; that no person of consequence

consequence was to remain with her; that lady Lisle was to attend her down, and stay at Coombe till she was settled; and he hoped that she would be prepared in a month to receive her royal pupil.

Lady Harrington found this a thing she both liked and disliked. The consequence it gave her in the world was flattering to her ambition; but the charge of such an undertaking was inimical to her ease. She was now advancing "into the vale of years;" but had good health, and was of a lively turn of mind.—Yet, having a kind of court in her house must be a great fatigue, which she had much rather have had nothing to do with.—Luckily for her, it was not left to her choice; the princess was preparing to come; she must receive her; and, as that was the

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case,

case, she was entirely left without a negative in the business, and of consequence had an undoubted right to complain, if it was disagreeable to her.

The family was in a great bustle for a fortnight; numberless questions were asked, and not one half of them could be answered. Lady Harrington's mind was so fully occupied, that to answer inquiries was a torment, instead of a pleasure, as formerly. Being one day extremely out of humour with the workmen, who were, as is not uncommon, making their job as long as they could, by doing as little as possible, her eldest son suddenly asked her, if the king was not a man of learning. "No," she replied, "I think not."—"Then, madam, your opinion seems to be very different from that of the rest of the people with whom I have conversed; for

“for they all assured me, that he was
“very much so.” — “Yes, yes, Robert,” returned lady Harrington, “his
“learning is like that of some others
“whom I know; it is a parcel of old
“lumber thrown about a house, against
“which every one is stumbling, and
“which is of no sort of use, even to the
“owner.” — “I fancy, madam,” he
replied, “you must have met with
“something unpleasant of that sort.” —
“I have,” she said, rubbing her elbow,
“fallen over an old bedstead and hurt
“myself; and the consequence is, that
“I have ordered the housekeeper to
“collect every thing of that kind to-
“gether, and divide it between the two
“maids who are to be married to Ralph
“and Harry.” — “A lucky hit for
“them,” said John, bursting into laugh-
ter. — “Well,” returned lady Har-
rington gravely, “I must step into the

“antechamber, for I believe those
“hangings will never be put up; they
“have been about them these three
“days.”

Preparations went on for the reception of the princess; and lord Harrington sent for his sons, desiring that they might be accompanied to London by Mr. Butler, who was appointed her royal highness's chaplain at the Abbey. The morning being fine, lady Harrington and her daughters went to the parsonage, to inform the good man of it. He expressed himself unworthy of the honour; but, as it was the wish of lord Harrington, he would go; yet he thought that his age was against such a scheme. “Age!” said my lady; “what is age, my good sir? You have no infirmities.”—“Madam,” he replied, “I am sensible of
“a great many *mental* ones.”—“Indeed,
“my

“my lady,” said Mrs. Butler, “your
“ladyship is quite right; and so is my
“husband too, for he does not ail any
“thing at all that I know of; I am sure
“he is as hale and fit for a journey as
“any man can be; only, as he says, he
“has many *mortal* infirmities; and so
“we have all, from the time we know
“any thing, to the time we leave this
“wicked world.”

The ladies made a short visit, and
returned to the Abbey. “Well, my
“dear,” said Mrs. Butler, “this is
“something like; we stand a good
“chance of being somebody now.—
“Only think of parson Butler’s being
“sent for to court. I warrant the whole
“county will ring of nothing else for
“months and months to come.”

Robert Harrington felt no great plea-
sure in the thoughts of a court; but

John's spirits were so volatile, that he did not know what to do with himself. At length the happy morning came, and they took their leave.

Elizabeth wished for the arrival of the princess; Matilda wondered whether her highness resembled any person she was acquainted with; — and lady Harrington was anxious to have every thing in proper order to receive her. — Another week completed all the improvements; lady Harrington then found her mind at ease, and could converse with her daughters as cheerfully and good-humouredly as before.

“I wish,” said Miss Harrington, “that I could know the princess’s disposition. Do you know her, madam? Is she grave or gay?” —

“That

“That is impossible for me to tell,” returned lady Harrington; “but, according to report, she is very amiable.” — “Was your royal mistress handsome?” asked Matilda. “You used to tell us, madam, that we should hear a great deal about her when our judgments were a little matured.”

“If you wish to hear what I have observed of that great queen, I will inform you; but I am afraid I shall be rather diffuse upon the subject.”

“Queen Elizabeth was what might be called an old woman, when first I had the honour of attending her.— Her person was rather above the middle size as to height, but not to be called tall;—muscular, but not fat;—her face fair, and a perfect oval.— She had small black eyes; her

" nose a little aquiline; her hand and
 " fingers very long and taper, and her
 " air and manner extremely majestic.
 " No mortal ever spoke better in public.
 " In different languages, she gave the
 " proper emphasis to every word; and
 " whatever was the subject of her dis-
 " course, it had the same propriety.—
 " Politics she considered as her first
 " study, which was the good of her
 " subjects at large, and the aggrandize-
 " ment of her kingdom in particular.—
 " She loved peace, encouraged arts,
 " manufactures, and commerce; and if
 " any foreign power encroached upon
 " her, she insisted on concessions, or
 " made war immediately, and always
 " preferred the latter, saying that the
 " first blow, well-directed, was half the
 " battle; and she was always prepared.
 " She did not like that her soldiers and
 " seamen should be unemployed, for she
 " used

" used to say, they would rust and be
 " good for nothing. She was extremely
 " fond of military shows. When the
 " Spanish Armada threatened the coun-
 " try with invasion, she went to the
 " army assembled at Tilbury, and, to
 " inspire the men with courage, made
 " a speech to them from the drumhead,
 " which had a good effect. Her mind
 " was firm and intrepid; and she never
 " gave up any thing when once she had
 " formed her resolutions, which an hour's
 " privacy in her closet would enable her
 " to do. To matters of business which
 " came suddenly forward she would
 " speak at once, without hesitation.
 " The people loved her, and at the
 " same time feared her; the former
 " they would have been ungrateful if
 " they *had not* done, and the latter she
 " took care they *should* do. She under-
 " stood music perfectly, and was fond

“ of romantic actions, tilts and tourna-
“ ments, and pageants where virtues and
“ vices were personified. — Extremely
“ prudent in the expenditure of the
“ public money, she always regretted
“ the expence war brought with it, and
“ frequently said, “ My people are so
“ liberal of themselves, that I ought to
“ take care of their money.” She was
“ very particular in keeping every one
“ in his proper place and situation; and
“ did not like that the middle ranks
“ should step too near the nobility; at
“ the same time she was extremely en-
“ raged when she found any of her
“ nobility degrading themselves. Every
“ man, she observed, might wish to
“ climb, it was a laudable ambition;
“ but that men who were high should
“ like to lower themselves, was what
“ she could not comprehend.

“ I must

“ I must conclude my account with
“ telling you, that this great queen was
“ a woman, and in some instances less
“ than a woman. She was extrava-
“ gantly fond of being personally ad-
“ mired long after her personal charms
“ were flown; sending frequently to
“ France for fashions, and being so mi-
“ nutely particular concerning her dress,
“ that I used to be surpris'd how her
“ mind could descend to such petty
“ trifles, at a time when it was engaged
“ in such important business.”

“ We are much obliged to you, my
“ dear madam,” said Miss Harrington,
“ for the account you have given us of
“ this extraordinary woman. Is king
“ James like the queen?”—“ If he be,”
said Matilda, “ I have a very great
“ respect for him.”—“ You ought to
“ respect him,” said lady Harrington;
“ his

“ his situation demands it. But king
“ James is very unlike my royal mistress;
“ he has a great aversion to war, and is
“ eternally patching up peace with other
“ nations by means of money, which is
“ giving the strength out of his own
“ into the enemy’s hands. He prides
“ himself upon that which is only pro-
“ per for a country schoolmaster, and
“ which the schoolmaster might gain
“ some credit by, a kind of pedantic
“ learning. He has no idea of the
“ value of money, but distresses himself
“ by lavishing it upon his favourites.”

“ Then,” said Matilda, the colour
flushing into her face, “ why does my
“ father obey his summons? for I would
“ not.” — “ If you considered well, you
“ most certainly would. The king is a
“ man without ambition, and is consti-
“ tutionally fearful; but he is far from
“ being

“being a tyrant, and is certainly a man
“of peace. Were you to think always
“as you did five minutes since, what
“would the country at large do? what
“would individuals suffer? you must
“support the king and the laws of your
“country, for the king and the laws sup-
“port you. — Suppose, for instance,
“that we had no king, some tyrant, with
“a strong hand, would break through
“the laws and govern us with severity
“and oppression. He *must* do it, be-
“cause being in a situation that he had
“no *right* to, he *must* maintain it by
“force. Now we will suppose this
“nation to be governed by a certain
“number of men, we will, for argu-
“ment’s sake, say fifty. These fifty
“would have a hundred different plans,
“and every individual would be pulling
“whichever way his inclination led him;
“the ambitious endeavouring to rule
“the

“ the rest, and the avaricious filling
“ their own private coffers.”

“ I stand corrected, my dear madam,”
said Matilda; “ these were circum-
“ stances to which I had not adverted;
“ and therefore it was foolish in me to
“ give my opinion of the matter.” —
“ Not at all foolish in mentioning them
“ to me,” replied lady Harrington, “ be-
“ cause I am always happy when I can
“ set you right; and it is of great conse-
“ quence to you, that you should say to
“ me exactly what you think; but had
“ you said this to strangers, they would
“ either have laughed at your folly, or
“ encouraged your ignorance, which will
“ always be the case when people give
“ their opinions upon what they do not
“ understand. — Take my advice then;
“ frequently ask questions for informa-
“ tion; if you do not comprehend the
“ answers,

"answers, apply to some sure friend,
"like myself, to explain them."

A messenger arrived the next day, from lord Harrington, to inform them that the princess Elizabeth was to set out in a coach and travel as far as the roads would permit, when her royal highness was to mount her horse and proceed. My lord desired that lady Harrington and her daughters would mount theirs, and meet her twenty miles from the Abbey, to pay their duty. They accordingly provided themselves, their waiting gentlewomen, and serving men, with palfreys, and set out in state. In the evening they met the princess, who received them very graciously, and the Harringtons were very happy. They accompanied her royal highness next day to the Abbey, where she was well pleased with her apartments. Lady
Lisle

Lisle was the only person of consequence who came with her; and being an old friend of lady Harrington's, it was a great gratification to see her. She was to remain six weeks at the Abbey, to see the princess properly settled, and then return to her own family.

Mr. Butler got his chaplain's scarf, and a pecuniary appointment, but was not, as his family expected, a bishop, nor a dean; he was not even canon of Windsor nor of Westminster. However, it would, it must come, and the scarf was a certain signal that future honours and emoluments were approaching. His daughters were now no longer young, but took great pains with themselves, and threw off at least ten years by their present juvenile appearance. They disdained the Coventry beaux; and it was considered as a gross affront

if

if a young yeoman in the neighbourhood ventured to send looks of admiration at church. — But Mrs. Butler could not put herself out of her way. She gathered up the eggs, and inspected the brewery and dairy. To give her due praise, nobody could have better puddings, ale, or butter; and it was a great gratification to her, when the labour of the day was over, to sit herself down in her armed chair, and talk of her royal highness's chaplain: with great enjoyment she would say to her only maid-servant, "Tell her royal highness's chaplain, that the toast and ale will be as dead as ditch-water if he does not come quickly."

Mr. Butler, for want of spirit, as his wife and daughters were often heard to declare, went on in the domestic way as before; dug in his garden; inspected his cattle; cultivated his flowers; and
entirely

entirely disregarded all the hints which were thrown out, that such employments were beneath the dignity of her royal highness's chaplain. — Meeting his wife one very warm morning, fatigued to death, with an old duck in her hand, and a lapful of young ones, he said, "I think, my dear, you are doing that which is very degrading to her royal highness's chaplain." — "What!" exclaimed Mrs. Butler; "here have I been toiling and moiling these two hours to get this duck out of the village pond, and was forced to give some children a penny to assist me; and here are fifteen as fine young ducklings as ever were hatched; they will be worth money by and by." — "I myself think," replied Mr. Butler, "that you are perfectly right; but I was surprised you did not find out, that it was a degradation to her royal highness's chaplain's

“lain’s wife.” — “Fiddle faddle ! am
“ I to lose my money because you are
“ her royal highness’s chaplain ? No, no,
“ my daughters will want more every
“ day. Consider what starching of ruffs
“ comes to, for they must wear them
“ now that you are her royal highness’s
“ chaplain.”

The lively John Harrington had got a cornetcy of horse, had been learning the military exercise, and was quite in his element, swaggering, and entertaining his sisters with conversations upon the sword and matchlock. He had several books upon the subject, which he wanted to read aloud and explain to them ; but as they did not seem at all interested in the business, he kept his military learning to himself.

The princess won the hearts of the family by her affability and condescension ; she was extremely fond of conversing with lady Harrington's daughters, and was always attended by them when she went out. Robert was improved by his journey to London ; at times he was cheerful and volatile, and then again busied in profound melancholy. This was observed by lord and lady Harrington ; but, as he seemed in health, they forbore to notice it. He sought solitude, and would hide himself in the woods for several hours together. His sisters were concerned, but could not account for the change ; they were perpetually inquiring after his health, but could not develope the cause of his disorder. One day Miss Harrington said, " Bridget step into the library, and inquire after my brother Robert ; I have not seen him to-day, and am afraid he is not well."

" Bless

"Bless his honour," said Bridget, "he is well enough, only a little troubled with the heart-ach." — "What do you mean?" — "Why, young lady, the folks say that he is in love; but that is no such great matter; the complaint is common enough, and every one is liable to it one time or another." — "But with whom is he in love?" asked Matilda. — "Why, it is the greatest secret that ever was, but it is true indeed." — "Impossible!" cried Miss Harrington; "Robert is, of all people, the least likely to fall in love." — "That don't signify, young lady, it may be impossible, for aught I know; but it is true for all that." — "Do tell us, Bridget," said Matilda. — "Why, you know, young ladies, that I have heard my lady say often and often enough to you, 'Never wish to have a secret; but if you are trusted, never

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"tell

“tell it again;’ and as you will, I am
“sure, follow my lady’s rules, I may
“tell it. Then [*in a low voice*] Mr.
“Sims, my lord’s man, who went to
“London with him, told me, that a
“friend of his who keeps a shop in the
“Strand, said, that he was told by lady
“Lisle’s housekeeper, that young lord
“Harrington was, as sure as fate, in love
“with lady Lisle’s eldest daughter.” —
“Well,” said Miss Harrington, after a
pause, “there is no great harm, if it be
“so.” — “Neither sin nor harm that I
“can see in the matter,” said Bridget;
“but very much to the young gentle-
“man’s credit, I think for my part.”

“But as you seem so much in the
“secret, is he to marry her?” —
“That, young lady, I could never find
“out; I have inquired, but to no pur-
“pose;

“pose; though they say folks never
“marry their first love.”

“No!” said Miss Harrington. “No,
“never,” replied Bridget; “it is a
“thing I never heard of in my life,
“except among kings and princes; they
“do such things; but I never heard of
“any body else; nay, sometimes it is
“the third, fifth, seventh, or ninth,
“which last number is very lucky in-
“deed; but it is always an odd number,
“you may depend upon that.” — “And
“pray,” said Marilda, “how far have
“you got in your numbers?” — “Just
“turned of the eighth, young lady; it
“would not do; I am a different per-
“son since the princess came here; and
“they cannot suppose that I will demean
“myself now.” — “We do not want
“to know your secrets; but tell us how
VOL. I. I “you

“you felt when you was first in love,
“that we may know the symptoms when
“it comes upon us.”

“Indeed,” returned Bridget, “I felt
“enough of the smart to remember it.
“One minute, as hot as burning coals;
“the next, as cold as clay. At one time,
“your heart feels as big as a lion’s; at
“another, less than a pigeon’s; and you
“are I-don’t-know-howish, and very
“disagreeable company to other folks;
“just like my young lord here, pittering
“and pining, and just ready to die away
“at the smell of cowslips and violets;
“neglecting your victuals and every
“thing else, till you are quite an ottamy,
“a perfect bag of bones, with no more
“colour than a dishclout.” — “And
“who could be so cruel as to reduce you
“to such a condition, Bridget?” —
“Why, lady, a carpenter’s son, who
“lived

“lived near my father’s in Essex.” —

“And why did not you marry him?” —

“Why, my poor mother, who is now

“dead and gone, said it would never be

“a match, because in the first place he

“was my first love ; and in the second, I

“was in love with him, and he was in

“love with Peggy Tubs ; and so, sure

“enough, it all went off.” — “Well,”

replied Matilda, “your mother must

“have been a very clever person to

“judge so nicely ; but you have had

“good health since you lived with us,

“and that must have been twenty years.”

“Oh yes,” said Bridget, “when the first

“brunt is over, it never hurts you

“after ; but the first is bad enough of

“all conscience ; misery enough ; but I

“never knew any body that died of the

“disorder, though songs and stories say

“so much about it. Ah, I never will

“believe it till I see it with my own

“eyes; it hurts only the heart; and it
“does not signify, for the scar cannot
“be seen; it is no eye-sore, and so who
“is the wifer?”

“Very true, Bridget,” said Miss Harrington; “scars upon the heart cannot be seen by the most minute observer; if they could, scars, I am afraid, would be often seen, and not proceed from love neither.”

“But, shall I go to my young lord,
“and inquire how he does?” —
“Yes,” said Miss Harrington. — She soon returned: “As sure as I am alive,
“young ladies,” said Bridget, “I have
“found it out.” — “Found what out?” demanded Matilda. “Why, all the
“love,” said Bridget; “for after I had
“inquired how he did, with your love
“and

“and commendations, I saw our lady
“and lady Lisle through the window
“walking in the garden. So, said I to
“myself, that lady Lisle is a sweet,
“handsome woman, said I ; but I think
“Miss, her eldest daughter, will make
“two such as her for beauty. Oh, she
“was the sweetest poppet that ever I
“saw !”

“What said Mr. Robert ?” — “Please
“your honour,” says I, “lady Lisle’s
“waiting-gentlewoman told me, that
“Miss Mary Lisle, her ladyship’s el-
“dest daughter, is so very extraordinary
“beautiful, that there is half a dozen
“different lords and knights begging at
“her feet for mercy every day.” — “I
“am afraid so, Bridget,” says his honour
with a terrible deep sigh ; “but I
“am writing, Bridget ;” and then he
took up a pen ; “and cannot talk ;
“so

“so tell my sisters I am much obliged
“to them for their inquiries.”

Bridget's history amused the young people ; but they were not so sure of the fact as the waiting-gentlewoman. They were determined, however, to watch their brother.

The Princess seemed to be happy in her situation, and did every thing that lady Harrington recommended to her. The time was approaching for lady Lisle's return to London. — One evening, after the Princess had retired to rest, lady Harrington and lady Lisle were sitting together, happy in each other's company, and chatting over stories of the old court. “I would give,” said my mother, “a great deal, if I could
“hear of a friend, who you may remember was brought up by my mother ;
“for

“ for it has been said that she left lady
“ Coniers in a strange way, and followed
“ her son, sir William Coniers, to Ire-
“ land ; but I believe no such thing ;
“ I knew her well, and flattered myself
“ that she was the last person in the
“ world to do wrong. — My dear ma-
“ dam, did you ever hear any thing
“ concerning her ?”

“ Perhaps,” said lady Lisle, “ I ought
“ not to tell you what I have heard, as
“ it is not to her advantage, and as you,
“ my dear lady Harrington, are so much
“ her friend.” — “ Yes, let me hear the
“ worst that can be said ; for I am afraid
“ I shall still retain my opinion.” — “ I
“ can give no information from my own
“ knowledge,” said lady Lisle ; “ what-
“ ever I may say proceeds entirely from
“ reports, which, however, I have not
“ heard contradicted.” — “ Alas !” re-

turned lady Harrington, "she has no
" friend but myself; surely she might
" have found me; but tell me, my dear
" madam, what the world have said upon
" the subject."

"I never saw her," said lady Lisle;
"but all agreed that she was a paragon
" of beauty. It was suspected that she
" was the daughter of the old lord Essex,
" but I never heard her mother named;
" that sir William Coniers was inclined
" to marry her, but that his mother was
" absolutely against it, and sent him to
" Ireland to be out of her way; that
" she followed him, and lived as his
" mistress; and what became of her
" afterwards I never heard. Then
" another story is, that she left lady
" Coniers in a clandestine manner, met
" some young man of fashion, whose
" name I never heard, lived with him,
" and

"and died in an obscure lodging in
 "London.—Again, I heard that her
 "conduct was so very improper, that
 "Mr. Devereux, her relation, had
 "insisted upon her leaving England;
 "that she turned catholic, and was in a
 "convent in France; that Mr. De-
 "reux, upon condition that she secluded
 "herself, gave her a pension; but this
 "was not true; for I spoke to him upon
 "the subject, and he did not even know
 "her personally."

"I may trust you, my friend," said
 lady Harrington, "by saying that I have
 "a fortune of my Matilda's in my hands,
 "which I will keep for her. When I
 "am assured of her death, I will give it
 "into Mr. Devereux's hands, as the
 "nearest relation; and you will do me
 "a singular favour, my dear madam, if
 "you will make inquiries concerning
 "her

"her on your return to town, and in-
 "form me of your success; for I am
 "not easy in having the care of other
 "people's money; but I will not give
 "it out of my hands till I am assured of
 "her death, when Mr. Devereux, I
 "hope, will acknowledge that I have
 "been a faithful steward."—"Mr. De-
 "vereux," replied lady Lisle, "is a very
 "respectable gentleman, though not
 "very rich; and I am sure would not
 "wish you to do any such thing; for,
 "in fact, he has very little right to it,
 "and I believe the law would not give
 "it him."—"If it did not," said lady
 Harrington, "he should have it."

Lady Lisle took her departure at the
 time fixed, and the princess was left
 entirely under the care of lady Harring-
 ton. Her highness was sensible, meek,
 extremely well-disposed, and for twelve
 months

months every person in the Abbey was happy, except lady Harrington. The thoughts of Matilda Devereux gave her continual pain; and the fatigue she went through was, to a person of her age, who loved ease and retirement, ill compensated by the honour she received. — It was not that sort of ease which is so apt to degenerate into laziness, that she liked; — but what is more properly termed leisure, or a command of her time, — which she now had not; yet she was perfectly alive to every thing around her, and to the minutest trifle which concerned the princess or her family. — What allowed her attention to be so particular was, that she never in the smallest degree troubled herself about the private affairs of her neighbours; she visited them, but knew nothing of their concerns, except they wanted her advice or assistance. — But, to confess

16 the

the truth, I verily believe it gave her no pleasure to hear gossiping stories, not one fourth of which are ever true; and as that was the case, it did not require a cunning man to find out the reason of her not troubling herself about them.

One very stormy night in the beginning of November, when the whole family were buried in sleep, a sounding of horns and trampling of horses were heard at the postern-gate of the Abbey; a loud knocking awakened the drowsy porter, who received from an officer on horseback orders to deliver a letter to lord Harrington immediately. My lord read it with agitation; he arose, went down, and desired the officer might be admitted. When he entered, "I think, sir," said lord Harrington, "I have the honour of seeing the earl of
" Oxford's

“Oxford’s son, colonel Vere.” The colonel bowed, and answered, “You are, I suppose, sir, lord Harrington, master of Coombe Abbey, and the princess Elizabeth is here.”—“Certainly, sir,” said his lordship; “and this note, which I have had the honour of receiving from the king, merely says, that he has sent you, as a person in whom he places great confidence, with a troop of horse; and for farther particulars refers me to you. I am, as you see, extremely agitated; but it proceeds from the anxiety I feel upon my royal master’s account.”—“My message,” returned the colonel; “will not be long, but will be unpleasant: it is this: a plot has been providentially discovered, which was to have blown up the parliament by means of gunpowder. The king and prince Charles were to have been
“murdered,

"murdered, and the princess Elizabeth
"set upon the throne."—"And who
"were concerned in this diabolical plot?"
—"Grey, Cobham, and Raleigh; but
"the instrument in the hands of these
"men was one Guy Vaux or Faux.
"Such is the outline of the affair; and
"the king, my lord, fearing that the
"country might rise, at the instigation
"of those people, and seize the princess,
"has sent me down to protect her, and
"to request that I may have ground set
"out in your park for barracks for my
"horse; as my orders are, to be as near
"the princess as possible, to keep a good
"guard, and do every thing that you
"with me may think proper for the
"purpose." Lord Harrington assented;
in the morning the ground was marked
out for the barracks, and workmen be-
gan to erect them.

Lady

Lady Harrington and the family were in extreme agitation the whole day; and when her ladyship informed the princess of the business, she burst into a flood of tears, and exclaimed, "What! will they murder my father and brother to make me a queen? You know, lady Harrington, that I cannot govern myself." — "Your royal highness," returned lady Harrington, "need not fear being queen at present. Your father and brother are living; and the discoveries which have been made will, I hope, effectually restore tranquillity."

The accommodations for the horse were soon completed, and every thing remained quiet for some months, except Bridget, who declared that she was frightened out of her wits, and should never be happy again; no, not if she lived

lived to be a hundred; for she was afraid when she went to bed, that she should be murdered before morning. She screamed violently at the sight of a drawn sword; and once, at the report of an arquebuse, really fainted away. She trotted about the house all day long; forgot every thing; had bad dreams,—and vowed she shook like an aspen-leaf when any of the people spoke to her.

One day, coming from church, they saw a multitude of people assembled in the park. Lord Harrington went up to them, and inquired the reason of their coming in such crowds. They told him, that the king and prince were both dead, and they were come to see and with queen Elizabeth joy on her accession to the crown. Lord Harrington assured them, that the king and prince

prince were both in good health; but he would request the princess to let them see her, provided they conducted themselves properly. They promised; and lord Harrington went to prepare the princess, who seemed extremely averse to speaking to them, and exclaimed in an agony, "Oh, my father, my brother! they have murdered them, and will force a bloody crown upon me."

Lord Harrington assured her, that it was only the country people, who, having heard the rumour which had been circulated, wanted to pay their duty to her; he could wish her royal highness would speak to them; and hinting what he thought would be proper upon the occasion, she at length consented. This princess was not a beautiful woman, but extremely interesting. She was rather tall, her face pale, with a melancholy cast of countenance; and her age at that
time

time about eighteen. Colonel Vere drew out his horse and pikemen, and informed the people that they must be silent, for the princess would condescend to speak to them. The princess, lady Harrington, and her daughters, attended by lord Harrington and his sons, came to the place appointed. The princess was mounted on horseback, that she might be seen by the people, and lord Harrington held her bridle. The family stood around her, the people next, and they were surrounded by the horse. The princess began, and stopped; then recollecting and recovering herself, said in a tremulous voice:

“I am very sorry, my good people,
“that the report of the death of the king
“my father, and the prince my brother,
“should have reached you. What
“you have been told is not true; and I
“persuade

“persuade myself that I make you happy
“by assuring you that they are both in
“perfect health. I feel myself much
“flattered by your attending upon me
“in this manner, and will assure my
“father of the loyalty and good wishes
“of his faithful subjects in this part
“of England, which cannot fail of be-
“ing extremely agreeable to him.”

When the princess was silent, lord Harrington and his sons said, “Long live the princess Elizabeth!” which was echoed and re-echoed by the people. Lord Harrington led her horse to the Abbey, and the crowd followed. As soon as she entered, barrels of ale and provisions were distributed among them, but the princess could not be prevailed upon to shew herself at the windows. The people enjoyed themselves in eating
and

and drinking, gave three cheers, and departed peaceably.

“Who would be a sovereign,” said the princess sighing, “when the misguided multitude will believe every thing they are told, and would pull down kingdoms, without thinking either of themselves or others? Surely the hand of the law and the edge of the sword ought to be severe upon them.”

“When your royal highness,” replied lady Harrington, “considers, that the people mean no harm, I am sure you will not wish them to be oppressed either by the law or the sword; they mean no mischief, and are loyal and good in themselves; but it is the ambitious and discontented who endeavour to work upon their feelings, and who inflame them by saying, that if
“things

“ things were different they might live
“ at their ease. By this method they
“ draw-in the unthinking multitude
“ merely as tools for their diabolical
“ purposes. At present your royal
“ highness is held up as a second Eliza-
“ beth; they are *told*, that they *must* be
“ happier under your government than
“ under any other; and they hold up
“ some things that the late queen did in
“ her progresses, which were nothing in
“ themselves, but very popular with
“ the people; for as she made the ge-
“ nius of the English nation her parti-
“ cular study, she endeavoured to flatter
“ their feelings; and when I have heard
“ her tell them that the English were
“ the first and bravest nation in the
“ world, they have shouted incessantly;
“ and sometimes, when her majesty
“ would speak to a crowd of the lowest
“ order, she would tell them that she
“ was

“ was assured there was not one among
“ them but could conquer four Spa-
“ niards; and at that moment the weak-
“ est of them would have attempted it,
“ and perhaps, in their enthusiasm, would
“ have beaten them. But the French
“ and Spaniards are allowed to be *almost*
“ as brave as ourselves; I cannot say
“ *quite so*, because I am so like the lower
“ orders of my countrymen that I will
“ not believe it possible.—I allow,” con-
tinued lady Harrington, “ that we are a
“ proud nation, from the duke to the
“ beggar; for we have all an inherent
“ courage and consequence about us,
“ that I think nothing can get the better
“ of. It is in our air, our soil, our men,
“ our animals. Such, my princess, are
“ the English, which character I hope
“ will never be changed so long as the
“ world endures, either by false prin-
“ ciples or false polish.” — The prin-
cess

cess bowed assent to her governess's politics.

Queen Elizabeth's seat was a favourite with the princess; she frequently sat there, and the young Harringtons would present her with the finest flowers.—One day she said, “ Lady Harrington, you
“ have informed me of many things to
“ which I was a stranger before. Do
“ not you think that the English are
“ passionately fond of flowers? for at all
“ our court pageants we should make
“ but a poor figure without the gar-
“ lands. Their perfume is so grateful,
“ the colours so bright, and the forms
“ so beautiful! then I have observed in
“ my rides about London on holidays,
“ that the people constantly had their
“ hands and bosoms filled with wild
“ flowers, which they were, I suppose,
“ conveying home to decorate their
“ houses.

“houses. The same I have observed
“in the country; for there is hardly a
“cottage garden without its rosemary,
“lavender, roses, and gillyflowers.”

“Your observation is very correct,”
replied lady Harrington; “there is some-
“thing so fascinating in flowers, that they
“are cultivated and admired by all; and
“we must, whatever may be our situa-
“tion in life, be pleased with what is
“beautiful and natural. A handsome
“person is always admired, and some-
“times very much to the possessor’s dis-
“advantage, because it makes them
“vain. We see some very beautiful
“wild flowers, when taken from woods
“and heaths and planted in our gardens,
“languish and die, because nature never
“intended them for the soil; and though
“the gardener may make them grow by
“bringing the native earth with them,
“yet

“ yet they never thrive so well as on
“ the brow of the mountain, or in the
“ bosom of the wood. We are, ma-
“ dam, certainly designed by Provi-
“ dence for reasonable creatures; and,
“ although a handsome exterior, any
“ more than rank, is not of our own
“ bestowing, yet the world will pay
“ homage to them. The handsome
“ are flattered because beauty gives plea-
“ sure to those who behold it; but it is
“ of little use to the possessor. Power
“ ought to be obeyed, and will be when
“ the powerful exercise it properly.
“ Crimes must be punished, and virtue
“ rewarded, which can only be done by
“ those to whom power is delegated.
“ Riches, when the possessors can be per-
“ suaded to make a proper use of them,
“ are of infinite benefit to the poor and
“ industrious; the rich may, if they
“ please, make themselves a blessing to
VOL. I. K “ their

“their neighbourhood:—Money, every
“person feels, is necessary; but, I think,
“for the happiness of a private in-
“dividual, an “elegant sufficiency,” is a
“much more desirable blessing than a
“profusion; for when we see the rich fre-
“quently very miserable, we cannot help
“saying with a sigh, Riches can neither
“cure the head nor the heart ach.”

“Thank Providence!” said the prin-
cess, “I possess neither beauty, power,
“nor riches; if ever I should, lady
“Harrington, I hope not to forget what
“you have said upon the occasion.”

Colonel Vere paid great attention to
Miss Harrington, and looked as if he
hoped and feared; but the lady was
too honest to coquet it with him, and
conducted herself with an elegant polite-
ness as usual. One evening as she was
writing

writing in her closet, her brother came in rather abruptly, and threw himself into a chair. "What is the matter, Robert?" said Miss Harrington; "are you fatigued?" — "No," he replied; "I came to tell you a secret; but perhaps you are acquainted with it." — "Then it certainly is no secret; but come, out with this mighty affair." — "Why, I caught colonel Vere last night strolling in the woods by moonlight, and I do believe that he is in love with you, — with you, Elizabeth." — "With me? no such thing, I can assure you; he has never said a word about it; and, therefore, what reason can I have to think so?" — "Words," replied Robert, "are not always the surest indications of a love-sick swain; a man may be in love, yet unable to speak. — Now I have found you out," replied Miss Harrington; "upon
K 2 " my

“ my word you are over head and ears ;
“ first, you wander to the woods and
“ listen to the nightingales, much more
“ than colonel Vere ; sigh ready to
“ break your heart ; nay, very frequently
“ talk to yourself ; and then you pay
“ such particular attention to lady Lisle,
“ that I really believe you are enamoured
“ of her. I wish you joy, for she is a fine-
“ looking woman, though an old one ;
“ and she will be no more than an old
“ woman twenty years hence.” — “ No,”
said Robert ; “ but I am in love with a
“ part of her.” — “ Her eyes are remark-
“ ably brilliant ; I never in my life saw a
“ woman with such a pair of eyes at fifty-
“ five.” — “ Nonsense !” he exclaimed.
“ No, no ; it is—it is her daughter that
“ I am in love with ; Miss Lisle has my
“ heart ; and if she will not give me hers
“ in exchange, I know not how to get
“ mine back again.” — “ Poor Robert !
“ shall

“ shall I inform my father or my mother ?” — “ No, my dear Elizabeth ; let me entreat you to keep it secret. My father has once or twice mentioned going to London in a few weeks ; and I therefore defer it till I accompany him thither. — Be secret, dear Elizabeth, and adieu.”

A review of the horse one day brought all the gentry and every other person in the neighbourhood into the park ; the princess, of course, was the principal figure upon this occasion ; and the Harrington family attended her. When the business was over, the princess complimented the colonel upon the dexterity and good discipline of his regiment, and said, “ Colonel Vere, I observed a man, who seemed higher than a common soldier, yet not so high as a subaltern, a remarkably well-
K 3 “ looking

"looking man, with blue ribbands tied upon his left arm."—"That man, madam," replied the colonel, "is a serjeant, a very good soldier, and of course a favourite of mine."—"But what means that ribband? Is it a badge of distinction from you?"—"No, madam," returned the colonel, "that is a mark of favour from some fair damsel." The princess smiled.

At the hour of retirement the sisters were talking of the review; and the gallant serjeant became the topic of their conversation. "He is in love, my lady," said Bridget. "The favour was from Jenny Hawthorn, I suppose."—"No," replied Bridget, with her face like crimson; "he looks higher."—"You are the fair damsel," said Miss Harrington; "your countenance betrays you."—"If you think I
" am

“ am wrong, my dear ladies——” —
“ Not at all, Bridget,” replied Matilda;
“ and the serjeant must be a remark-
“ ably clever man so soon to change
“ your opinion, when you had such
“ horrors concerning the soldiers, which
“ you must now be sensible were un-
“ founded.”

While the troops were quartered in the park John Harrington was in his element. He loved the parade of the tented field; he delighted in the neighing steed, and all the pomp and circumstance of war; he was indefatigable in the duty of a soldier, but careless and unthinking in every other respect. He was wrapped up in military achievements, and conversed and thought of scarcely any thing else; he wished to combat dangers, and would have rushed headlong into fire or water, with as little concern as he would have

K 4

thrown

thrown himself down to sleep; fear and danger were words for which he had no meaning or use; they were banished his memory; he only regretted that he had not lived in the last century, or in the gallant reign of Elizabeth; was perpetually reading of that melancholy period of our history which describes the wars of York and Lancaster; envied the great Warwick, and the other heroes of those times; but could never peruse the story of the fall of Margaret's gallant son, or the death of young Rutland, without an involuntary tear.

Lord Harrington saw the extreme rashness of his son with great concern, and wished to moderate it. He represented to him, that ferocity and true valour were distinct things; an officer, he said, should certainly lead his men gallantly to an attack, and encourage them

them as much as possible by his example ; but to sacrifice their lives and his own by ill-timed rashness was shocking. He ought to be cool and considerate, and understand the ground he was upon, as well as that on all sides of him ; rashness was always an advantage to the enemy ; “ and, my son,” he added with a sigh, “ I now tell you, what I hope “ will not happen during my life or “ yours : but I see with the greatest concern, that there is at present a set of “ restless spirits in this happy island, “ that want they know not what ; they “ seem to wish for innovation, which is “ always extremely dangerous ; but when “ I am gone, my son, be true to your “ king, and you will of course be true “ to your country and yourself. Respect its civil jurisdiction, and under “ every circumstance obey it. I have “ seen and read the history of many “ countries,

“countries, and have found, for the
 “good of the subject, none equal to
 “our own. Therefore, reverence its
 “laws and obey them.” John bowed
 and promised to follow his advice.

My lord walked out, ruminating upon
 what he had said to his son, and met
 colonel Vere, whom he knew to be a
 good soldier in every respect. He
 opened his heart to him, and expressed a
 thousand fears on account of his youngest
 son. The colonel heard all with won-
 derful patience ; and when my lord stop-
 ed, he said, “ I do not think your lordship
 “ought to be at all alarmed at the con-
 “duct of the cornet. He seems to me
 “to be exactly the thing I could wish a
 “youth to be in his situation. As to
 “rashness, I dare say that in hunting he
 “would rush through a pond rather than
 “go round it ; but be assured, military
 “discipline

“discipline will keep him in order; he
“has a glorious spirit, and will be an
“honour to his country. Let him feel
“his situation, I mean let him be a pro-
“per time learning to obey as a subal-
“tern; then let him remain as captain
“two years before you wish him higher;
“but should he perform any service to
“merit the applause of his country, or
“the rewards of his sovereign, in that
“case never wish to keep him back.
“Recollect, my lord, what you were at
“his age.” — “I was much more in-
“clined to the cabinet,” replied my
lord; “I did not like that extreme
“bustle which must inevitably attend a
“military life; but the threatenings of
“the Spaniards made me a soldier. I
“was a captain under lord Hunsdon,
“who had the immediate guard of her
“majesty’s person; and from my sen-
“sations then, and even now that I feel
“my

“ my arms enervated by time, I would
“ do my best to serve my sovereign and
“ guard my own rights, which is the
“ same thing. But war, my good sir,
“ always fills me with melancholy;
“ for we are on both sides destroying
“ the human species ; we are taking
“ children from their aged parents ;
“ tearing husbands from their families,
“ and laying whole countries waste, by
“ a science which one would think was
“ invented by the devil himself.”

“ Your lordship’s observations are
“ certainly true,” answered the colonel ;
“ but all the inhabitants of creation
“ destroy each other. Animals of the
“ same species seem to have a rooted
“ hatred ; you may see it in the lowest
“ order of beings. Yesterday I observ-
“ ed an unfortunate stranger hen who had
“ got into your poultry-yard ; it was
“ not

“not feeding-time, and yet the whole
“family were in an uproar; the hen
“defended herself well, but would most
“certainly have been killed if one of the
“domestics had not rescued her.” —
“But, my dear colonel Vere, that was
“perfectly justifiable; the hen was an
“intruder, and mine considered her as
“coming to take possession of their do-
“mains, in which case they were cer-
“tainly right. It is the law of nature;
“the rooks, the bees, &c. have a cer-
“tain knowledge, instinct, or whatever
“you please to call it, of property.
“What I dislike is, when nations war for
“a little barren territory, which cannot
“be of any possible use to either of
“them.”

“Yet war, my lord, taken in another
“light,” replied the colonel, “is useful;
“it takes off the idle, the profligate, and
“the

“ the petty thief. Those may all make
“ good soldiers ; proper discipline will
“ make men think who never thought
“ before ; they may become good and
“ useful members of society ; and as your
“ lordship knows that wars have been
“ exercised between nations ever since
“ the beginning of time, I almost think
“ it a presumption not to suppose it
“ necessary.” — “ It may be so, sir,”
replied my lord, “ for I cannot prove
“ by any argument that it is not.”

Mr. Butler, by attending the princess,
became a great favourite ; but he was not
yet a bishop, to the utter astonishment
of his wife and daughters.—They could
not think the reason of it ; he that was
tagging from morning till night to and
fro, from the parsonage to the Abbey,
and from the Abbey to the parsonage,
had not got one single thing ; nothing

on the earth but a scarf and a shabby pension. What could be the reason they could not divine ; but to be sure it was, one way or other, the most unaccountable thing that ever happened, to have their father chaplain to her royal highness, who most likely would one time or other be queen ; for they had heard a hundred times, that prince Charles had but a sickly constitution ; and the people were so very fond of her royal highness, because her name was Elizabeth, that they should not wonder if her royal highness was made queen even against her royal highness's own consent.

However, these good gentlewomen were not quite in the secret ; for the princess had desired lord Harrington to hint to Mr. Butler, that if any preferment should fall, which was agreeable

to

to him, he should say so, as she wished that so good a man should be better known in the world, and he should have her good wishes and recommendation to the king. Lord Harrington acquainted Mr. Butler with this gracious message, which he received with extreme gratitude, but said that he was too old and unambitious ; that he found himself over-rated by her royal highness's goodness ; that the honour of being her chaplain at the Abbey was the utmost of his wishes ; he was happy in the situation wherein Providence had placed him ; and having always lived above want, and below envy, he wished to die so, though at the same time he was extremely sensible of her goodness towards him. The princess was at first surprised, but could not help feeling the propriety of the answer ; and to confer some personal favour said, " I will go next Thursday to
" the

“ the parsonage, eat some of Mr. Butler’s fruit, and bring back a nose-gay.”

The report of this soon reached the parsonage ; and the family, from the moment of its arrival, till the important Thursday, were all in a bustle. Such decking out of the windows and chimney pieces, and pulling out cushions worked by their grandmother, which had not seen the light for twenty years ! Mrs. Butler was resolved to array herself in the identical gown she was married in, and to put on a very handsome thumb-ring. She declared the gown had never been worn but twice ; its colour was a beautiful dark green, and it was made of true Genoa velvet. The thumb-ring formerly belonged to Mr. Butler’s father, a sober thriving citizen, and it fitted wonderfully well, having undergone a winding

winding within, which service was dexterously performed by her youngest daughter.

At length the day arrived, and the princess, attended by the family, walked to the parsonage. Mrs. Butler, who narrowly watched the approach of her royal guest from the garret window opposite the road, being determined to have the honour of opening the wicket-gate of the little court, which led to the parsonage, that Mr. Butler might not snatch it from her, kept her eyes fixed upon the road, being sure the princess would come with all her attendants on horseback, as she sometimes went to the nobility in the neighbourhood. As the princess, however, took a shady walk through the park, of course Mrs. Butler did not see her coming down the road; but hearing a little bustle in the fore court, she saw with infinite regret Mr.
Butler

Butler with the gate in his hand, and the princess entering. She got into the parlour when they had been in it about two minutes, and the princess was saying, "What a pretty little place, Mr. Butler! "I do not wonder that you are so fond of it, it is so neat and so peaceful." — "May it please your royal highness," he returned, "I have lived many years here very happily."—"Now shew me your garden," said the princess; "and tell me which is your favourite part of it." He attended her to a bower, composed of eight elms planted in a circle, with honey-suckles winding round them, and sweet-briar growing as a hedge within. In the middle stood a table, with one leg let into the earth, of no very elegant fashion, and a circular wooden bench within the sweet-briar.

"I am not surprised, Mr. Butler," said the princess, "that this is your favourite

“vourite retreat,” [*sitting down at the same time upon the bench,*] “for it is very
“delightful.” — “I spend my mornings
“here, madam,” he replied, “when the
“weather is fine, in reading, writing,
“and meditating, the only things I am
“good for.” — “That,” observed the
princess, “is saying a great deal for
“yourself; for the greater part of the
“world cannot or will not do half so
“much. But did not you promise me
“some fruit? I should like to have it
“here.” — “Bring the fruit, my dears,”
said Mr. Butler to his daughters; “and
“the flowers we collected this morning.”
They withdrew, and brought them into
the bower.

“Dear me!” said Mrs. Butler to her
husband in a whisper, while the princess
was eating the fruit and conversing with
lord and lady Harrington; “dear me!
“won’t

"won't the princess have my worked
"cushions to sit upon? Shall I fetch
"them out of the parlour?" — "No,
"my dear, the princess prefers sitting
"here without them." — "Oh," said
she in an agony, "I am quite ashamed;
"ed; this place is in such a pickle, and
"hardly fit for any Christian soul to come
"into, much less her royal highness.
"What a thing it is for such a person to
"fit in such a place!" — "The princess
"prefers it, my dear," returned Mr.
Butler. "What does that signify?"
said his wife; "I am half mad about it,
"and shall be quite so in five minutes.
"What shall I say to my neighbours?
"They will think, nay, they must think
"that my cushions were disdained by her
"royal highness." — "Then tell them,
"my dear, that the princess was in raptures
"with this bower," said Mr.
Butler. "I would not tell a lie to save
"my life; I am sure her royal highness
"is

“is in no raptures at all; for she is as
“still as a mouse, and looks as careless
“as any thing.” — “The princess is
“enjoying herself in her own way,”
said Mr. Butler; “therefore, my dear,
“if you ever wish to see me a bishop,
“do not say another word.”

This silenced the good woman immediately; but it did not prevent some bitter reflections entering her imagination, as to the disgrace her embroidered cushions had met with, in having an old wooden bench preferred to them.

The princess commended the fruit and admired the flowers, the latter of which she put into her bosom; then arose, walked round once or twice, and took her leave. Mrs. Butler had now the honour of opening the wicket-gate for her royal highness, and received a
gracious

gracious smile. The party walked back very well satisfied to the Abbey.

"Well," said Mrs. Butler, "if any body had told me, that a princess was to come into my house in such a way, I could not have believed it; I should have been so angry, that I should have been ready to have torn them in pieces. Why, she never went into the best room at all; saw nothing of my nice brown boards, that are constantly rubbed till they shine like a looking-glass, and which for years and years I have taken such pains about. Nay, I don't know [*speaking to her daughters*] that there has been a foil upon them these ten years. And as to you, my dear, you will never be a bishop, I am sure; for instead of saying that you were *contented*, and all that nonsense, you should have said, that

“that you were quite miserable, should
“have abused the house, and called it
“the shabbiest place in the world;
“which would have given her royal
“highness some hints of the matter. I
“warrant she would have understood
“you well enough ; but you will never
“be a bishop, I see that.”

“I do not intend it, my dear,” said
Mr. Butler ; “I live happily, I have a
“good income while I do live, and when
“I die can leave you and our daughters
“an easy competence. Could you see
“into the world, you would, I am sure,
“be perfectly satisfied.” — “No,”
said she, “I can never be satisfied when
“people don’t make the most of their
“good luck. Why, her royal highness
“coming here was a chance in ten
“thousand, and see how you have let
“it slip through your fingers.” — “My
“dear

"dear wife," said Mr. Butler, "consider
"how many years we have lived hap-
"pily together in this place; our lot has
"been extremely fortunate; we have
"not been tossed about the world as
"many others are; let us not wrangle,
"therefore; you know that peace is
"what I prefer to every thing; and you
"also know, that I would, to please you,
"give up any thing but my happiness.
"Rest assured, that I am not fit to be a
"bishop, nor you a bishop's wife. We
"are respected in our present situations,
"and do not let us entertain a wish to
"become ridiculous in our old age."

"Well, well," said Mrs. Butler,
rolling up her best gloves, "I must go
"and take off this gown, and brush and
"fold it nicely. I will take care of my
"affairs, whatever other folks may do
"with theirs."

Lady Lisle wrote to lady Harrington, to say, that she had made every inquiry in her power concerning her friend, but without effect ; that she had seen Mr. Devereux, who returned his thanks for her care of the property, but that he could hear nothing of Matilda Devereux ; and, as that was the case, he begged that the estate and money might remain in the hands of so good a steward as her ladyship.

The princess, on her return to the Abbey, expressed so much satisfaction at the visit to Mr. Butler, that for some time she continued the subject. “ How
“ happy must those good people be !”
said the princess ; “ how free from the
“ storms of life ! Every violent blast
“ which agitates the great, blows too
“ high to affect them. Happy, happy
“ in retirement and competence, they
“ glide

“glide smoothly through the world,
“and in a good old age will sink peace-
“ably into the grave; their memories
“loved by their friends, and respected
“by their neighbours!”

“Few men have lived better beloved
“than Mr. Butler,” said lady Harrington; “and no man has deserved it more.”
“His meekness, cheerfulness, good
“sense, and above all his religion and
“charity, have marked him as a blessing,
“confined indeed to a little spot; but
“every individual within his reach has
“been benefited either by his precept
“or example. I assure your royal
“highness that I speak from my own
“feelings and knowledge; his religion
“is sincere and cheerful; his charity be-
“stowed with the greatest possible ad-
“vantage to the receiver; nay, I can
“give you, madam, other proofs of his
L 2 “character:

“character: he was ever indulgent to
“the follies of youth and inexperience,
“and can bear the tiresome prattle of
“weak uninformed people without
“shewing any impatience. His tem-
“per is so good, that he is never agitated
“by the little inevitable evils of life,
“but bears them with a sobriety and
“patience that charms me. To sum
“up his character in the words of our
“great dramatic poet, “Take him for
“all in all, we ne’er shall look upon his
“like again.”

“I am concerned,” said the princess,
“that he will not move in a higher
“sphere for the benefit of mankind.
“His example might do much good;
“yet, at the same time, I must acknow-
“ledge, that he has shewn his judgment
“and good sense, in preferring ease and
“retirement,

"retirement, at his time of life, to the
"bustle of the world."

The next day, as the young ladies were at their toilet, Mrs. Bridget seemed extremely low in spirits. "What is
"the matter?" said Miss Harrington.
"Are you not well? You seem not to
"be so cheerful as usual." — "There
"is cause enough for that, good young
"lady. Who could have thought such
"changes and chances could happen in
"the world! then the deceitfulness of
"some folks! I am sure, what with
"their swearing, and what with their
"lying, one would think that the *Old*
"One himself had got fast hold on them.
"I am sure my heart aches when I
"think on't." — "What is all this
"about, Bridget? You talk as if you
"were mad." — "So I am almost cra-
"zy; fit for nothing in this world

“but to be a cousin Betty, and wander
“about the country, all betrappured
“with flowers and willow-garlands.” —
“Speak out,” said Miss Harrington;
“is the serjeant ——” — “The serjeant
“is a devil *in carnation*!” said Bridget.
“Last—yes, last Monday, he got some-
“thing great as to money; it was, I
“think, a *quarter-of-a-master’s* place; a
“very fine thing, which brings in plenty
“of money; what could possess the man
“I can’t think; but this blessed morning
“was he married to Bet Hawthorn, a
“tallow-faced minx, who is little better
“than a couple of deal boards clapped
“together. Oh that ever I was born!”
A flood of tears came very seasonably to
the waiting-gentlewoman’s relief, or the
complaint might have been as long as
ever was uttered by forsaken damsel in
romance:

“Take

“Take courage, Bridget,” said Miss Harrington; “take courage, and do not expose yourself in this manner. You will be the jest of the whole family; you will furnish them with laughter for the whole winter; I should be glad to see you carry it off with a high hand; that would show your spirit, and give me pleasure.”—“It is very well, my dear young lady,” returned Bridget, “for those to laugh who win; but a-fegs the loser generally laughs on the wrong side of the mouth.”—“I am surprised,” said Matilda, “that this fellow did not take a fancy to Jenny Hawthorn, who is a very pretty girl.”—“No, no, young lady, she would not so much as look at him; that farthing-candle Bet has got forty good marks left her by her grandmother; and that was the bait which caught this gudgeon. Joy go
L 4 “with

“with them, say I; I warrant she will
“cut a pretty figure on the top of a
“baggage waggon in a frosty morning,
“with her nose nipped with the cold,
“till it is the colour of the long purple
“flower that grows in the meadow;
“and should they be sent beyond sea to
“fight the blacks, there would be a
“triumphant day for poor Bridget!”

“Do not be so ill-natured, Bridget,”
said Miss Harrington. “Come, I am
“going to look over my wardrobe;
“perhaps I may find something that I
“do not want.”—“God bless you, my
“dear good lady! and if I don’t pluck
“up a spirit, and wear that nice gown
“with an air that shall tell them I defy
“them all! and then, let them snigger
“and sneer just as much as they like,
“Bridget will carry it off in defiance,
“or die for it.”—“Here is a gown,”
said

said Miss Harrington, "which you shall have."—"It will become you of all things," said Matilda, "and will suit your complexion exactly."—"Now," said Bridget, "I am a match for them; and no more moving stories shall he tell me; how a great lady died for love of him, and so broke her heart, poor soul! because her relations were cruel, and such like. These things has he said many and many a time in the buttery; but he shall never do it again, I can assure him:"—and away she trotted with her gown under her arm.

The princess grew extremely attached to the Harringtons, and her days had passed quietly and pleasantly at the Abbey.—One morning a courier arrived with letters from the king to her royal highness and lord Harrington, desiring

the princess to come to town, and lord Harrington with his family to attend her. His lordship's letter gave him to understand, that the Prince Palatine was arrived from the continent, and wished to marry the princess; to which the king had no objection, but would not have it mentioned to her till they had seen each other. The princess regretted leaving the Abbey, but was prepared to meet the king with cheerfulness. The young Harringtons were in raptures; they thought and conversed of nothing else. Elizabeth and Matilda wanted to see the world, particularly the court, though lady Harrington had frequently told them, that it was not what it had been in the glorious reign of her royal mistress; that every thing was flat and uninteresting, compared to the magnificent court of Elizabeth. It was sufficient that they had not seen it; and they, like

like most young people, had a great deal of curiosity, which mere description can never gratify.

Robert was as happy as lovers were permitted to be in those days, encompassed by hopes and fears, and ready to lay down his life at the feet of his divinity. John, in colonel Vere's regiment, was to have the honour of being one of her royal highness's escort to London, and was thinking of the pleasure he should feel on entering town, having, while with his father, envied a troop of horse that he saw prancing along the streets, when he heard the admiration of the multitude upon the occasion. Oh, thought he, had I but a troop, how well my men and horses should be disciplined, how smart their regimentals and accoutrements should be, and what pleasure I should enjoy in having them the first in the kingdom!

Every one flatters himself with the attainment of what he wishes, and hope was certainly implanted in the human heart to sustain us through all the trying vicissitudes of life. — John Harrington certainly looked forward to a truncheon; he did right, and I could wish all my warlike countrymen would do the same. An admiral's flag or a truncheon are fine things. My mercantile friends look to an alderman's gown, a full purse, and a snug villa; my country neighbours, to being respectable magistrates, experimental farmers, and the guardians of the poor; and you, my honest friends, who plow the field, or work at the loom, to a nice little snug farm or shop: be therefore industrious and sober.

But to you whom birth and fortune have placed in a higher station in this
happy

happy island, it is to you that we look up to support the laws of our country, to cherish its constitution, to preserve its interests and its liberties, and to hand them down pure and unsullied to your sons; to foster genius, in whatever form it appears, and to study, protect, and encourage the liberal arts.

The cavalcade travelled slowly towards London, and in a few days reached it. The princess was eager to embrace the king and prince Charles. They thought her much improved, and the prince said a great many agreeable things to lady Harrington upon the occasion. Lady Harrington had done her duty in every respect, and therefore the compliments paid by the prince were grateful. The pains she had taken were amply repaid, and she felt herself relieved from a great care on that account. She in-
quired

quired for her friend Matilda, but could hear nothing; this shed a damp upon her feelings, for she foreboded that her friend was no more; she was fearful of it, and persuaded herself it was so.—She wished to see Mr. Devereux; but the real fact was, she wanted the friend of her early life with her.

The days of youth are so pure and simple, when passed in the country, that reflection upon them can never fail to give pleasure. The walk in Spring, when Nature begins to give promise of blossoms, the springing corn and grass, the singing of the larks above our heads, the simple twittering of the hedge-sparrow in the bushes, and the fluttering of the butterflies in the green lanes, must give to an unsophisticated mind those kinds of emotions and sensations which are much easier felt than described.

But

But our family had nothing to do with these pleasures at present. The elector was presented to the princess; the consequence was, that the princess liked the elector, and the elector fell point-blank in love with the princess. Nothing farther was to be done but to marry them in the most magnificent manner possible; and the wedding was to be graced with all those shows which were the taste of the times; jousts and tournaments were to be held with great pomp in the morning, and the evening was to conclude with masques and dancing.

The lists were set, and all the ladies of any fashion assembled, when the knights with their beavers down appeared at the barrier. The trumpets sounded, and prince Charles and the elector came forward; the prince upon a gallant black horse, and the elector
upon

upon a cream-coloured courser, with a white mane and tail. The motto of the prince was, *I wish for victory*, and that of the elector, *Love and honour support me*. They contended some time; at length the prince's horse made a false step, and the noble rider was thrown to the ground; the elector was declared victor, and received from the fair hand of the princess, with a suitable compliment, a beautiful embroidered scarf of her own working. Other gallant knights signalized themselves by their prowess and dexterity, and the masque and ball concluded the evening.

The next day Robert Harrington entered the lists, with *Love, assist thy votary*; and was opposed by sir Henry Wingfield, with *I profess not till I conquer*: the latter was victorious, and received from the princess a fan of
5 feathers

feathers to present to the mistress of his heart. He knelt gracefully, and gave it to Matilda Harrington. Colonel Vere then approached, with *Soldier, contend for the fairest*; and was met by Sir Charles Glenham, with *Beauty challenges the field*: the prize was won by the former, who received a diamond heart set round with rubies, which he presented to Miss Harrington.—Then rode in two knights without mottos, who sustained a long contest; at length victory declared in favour of the knight upon the white steed, who proved to be Robert Harrington, and the unfortunate opponent was Sir Charles Glenham. Robert hastened to present his prize, which was a weeping cupid, to Miss Lisle; but, somehow or other, both the giver and receiver hesitated so much in their speeches, that those about them could never find out their meaning.

ing. At last John Harrington appeared, with *Forward in obtaining glory*; and was opposed by a young soldier, sir Robert Rich, with *Conquest or death*; and after a long contest, in which the combatants received great applause for their scientific knowledge of the profession, John Harrington unhorsed his antagonist, and received from the princess a golden cupid, shooting his arrows blindfold. — He stood like a statue, for some time, not knowing what to do with the prize; at last he presented it to an old general's wife who happened to be near him. This saved him trouble, and he really was at that time unprepared to select one who was young and beautiful, and was well pleased when the old lady promptly said, "As glory is your mistress, sir knight, I accept this as your friend."

For

For some weeks the young Harringtons were as happy as possible ; but the electress was going to leave the kingdom, and lord and lady Harrington wished themselves at Coombe Abbey. Robert had received some favourable glances from Miss Lisle ; and colonel Vere did every thing to obtain the like from Miss Harrington. Sir Henry Wingfield was dying for love of Matilda ; lady Naunton, the old general's wife, patronized John, telling him, that the compliment he paid her was what she did not expect, as it had not happened for thirty years ; and the general was so well pleased with his gallantry and motto, that he wished to do every thing in his power to put him in a way of obtaining glory ; for which purpose he presented him with a commission of captain of horse which the king had been pleased to bestow upon him. John
Harrington,

Harrington, who had been laughed at, and received volleys of wit from his companions, thought himself extremely well off; he obtained the honour of kissing the lady's hand, and was allowed the privilege of terming her his mother.

At length the day arrived for returning to the Abbey; and our family departed with various emotions and various reflections; for it is certain, when people are in a crowd they may act, but it is seldom that they give much way to reflection; in riding from London to Coventry, however, they had sufficient leisure for the latter. When lady Harrington drew near the Abbey she rejoiced extremely; now she hoped to find repose and happiness for the rest of her days. "Oh," she said, "that my dear Matilda could but appear, to witness the heart-felt joy I feel! my
"eldest

“eldest son and my daughters are likely
“to be settled agreeably to their inclina-
“tions, and my youngest son to be pro-
“moted in the profession of his choice,
“Every thing that regards my family
“wears a promising aspect; and we
“ought surely to be thankful to Divine
“Providence for thus showering down
“its blessings upon us!”—In this frame
of mind she entered the Abbey.

Lord Harrington had sufficient interest to get his son's troop quartered at Coventry, as it was the greatest pleasure of his life to have his family about him; and captain John Harrington arrived with his soldiers a few days after the family reached the Abbey.

My lord was happy in once more being able to attend his favourite avocations, and began to make inquiry into the state
of

of affairs, by sending for his steward.
“ Well, Jarvis, how goes the farm, and
“ the stock ?” — “ As well as can be,
“ an please your honour,” said the old
man ; “ only sorely troubled with ver-
“ min.” — “ Then the gamekeepers do
“ not do their duty,” said my lord.
“ Yes, your honour, indeed they do,
“ when they durst ; but they are mortal
“ fearful of going out o’ nights to set
“ their gins now.” — “ What are they
“ afraid of, Jarvis ?” — “ Why, of
“ witches, your honour, the worst sort of
“ vermin in the nation.” — “ Witches !”
said my lord, “ where do they come
“ from, and what harm can they do
“ me ?” Jarvis shook his head. “ They
“ come (as I have been told, my lord,
“ by those that know) from Lapland ;
“ they ride upon broomsticks till they
“ get into Scotland, just as well in the
“ clouds, as your honour on your best
“ horse

“ horse to Coventry, and in as little time.
“ Now I heard that there was a procla-
“ mation in Scotland directing them all
“ to be made away with ; for not a
“ horse, a cow, nor any living creature,
“ could be found for them : and so,
“ many, aye, and many of the worst
“ sort, are fled into England.” — “ This
“ is a strange story, Jarvis,” said my
lord ; “ and I am in hopes not true.
“ I have heard of proclamations against
“ witches ; but indeed I look upon them
“ to be only poor superannuated women,
“ without friends, or the means of sup-
“ porting themselves ; which gives their
“ neighbours cause to suppose that they
“ are familiar with the devil or his
“ agents. But I do not think it possible.”
— “ It is indeed, your honour ; and I
“ never see an ugly old woman sitting at
“ her door in the sun, bent double, her
“ nose and chin like a pair of nut-
“ crackers,

“crackers, and a cat by her side, but I
“am always sure she is a witch.”

“Well, well,” said my lord, rather
peevishly, “what mischief have they
“done me?” — “Done!” said the old
man, “more harm than they will ever
“do good. First, your honour, they
“have killed the fine old flea-bitten
“mare, lamed two of the best colts,
“given Topper the yellows, thrown
“Lofty into the staggers, broke Pop-
“pet’s knees as he came from Coventry,
“whither I rode him myself, and made
“Black Bess slip her foal; three of the
“Cows are dead-lame of the maltlong;
“they have turned three of the yearlings
“dizzy, killed twelve hens of the roup,
“sucked the blood of seven turkeys,
“hunted the ducks about, so that five
“have forsaken their nests, given twen-
“ty sheep the rot, and the pigeons have
“flown

“flown about like mad; and there was
“nothing but a poor silly owl in the
“house.” — “That was surely enough
“to frighten them,” said my lord; “but
“who is suspected of all these things?” —
“Several,” said Jarvis; “there are too
“many of them, your honour.” —
“But are there any pointed out as being
“very bad?” — “Why, my lord, some
“say the old woman upon the common
“is the worst; and others say she that
“lives in the White Cottage; but I do not
“think there is a pin to chuse.” — “I
“shall inquire about them,” replied my
lord; “but at the same time must confess,
“that all you have told me may have
“proceeded from natural causes.” —
“To be sure, your honour,” said Jarvis,
“nothing in the world is so natural as
“for an ugly old woman, when she can
“do no good at all, to turn witch; for
“when they are so helpless and so old

“as not to be able to work out of the
“house, or spin in it, why then taking
“up witchcraft is a very good trade.”—
“But what can they make of it?” said
my lord. “Oh, your honour, why to
“be sure the more mischief they do, the
“better. Now, it was but this very
“day fortnight, that Goody Wright’s
“eldest girl was bewitched with fits,
“and Goody being a cunning one, what
“did she do, but go to the witch in the
“White Cottage, and offered her money
“to cure her. This witch is a sort of a
“doctor, my lord; but she would not take
“a farthing, nothing but a little basket
“of apples, and told Goody Wright
“that if she came in half an hour she
“would have something ready for the
“poor girl; to work she went, and, I
“warrant, a power of charms were
“muttered over the melfs, for the girl
“soon got well and has not been ill

“since.” — “Well, Jarvis,” said my lord, “if they have the power of doing good, they may certainly be of infinite use to mankind.” — “Yes, yes,” replied the old man, “but that maggot seldom bites; for evil they are, and therefore evil betide them; and if I was your honour, I would——” — “We will say no more of them at present,” said my lord; “how does the corn look?” — “Oh, purely, my lord; as fine crops as eye can see or heart can wish; and the young trees planted last year thrive mainly; for I have been careful to keep them from the cattle.” — “That is well, Jarvis; order my horse, that I may go and look at them.”

Lady Harrington with her daughters went into the garden, and inquired after her treasures; her carnations, tulips,

and auriculas. The gardener looked melancholy. "My lady," said he, "I have the worst news in the world to tell you; every thing here is bewitched; hardly any business I have undertaken has gone right; and indeed, my lady, I have worked hard, and thought of nothing but my business night and day; but it does not signify, I might as well lean upon my spade from morning till night; for, as sure as I live, we are all bewitched." — "Bewitched!" said Miss Harrington; "by whom?" — "Some say, young lady, by the witch in the White Cottage, and others, by the old hag upon the common; but I know a little of her in the White Cottage." — "And what do you know of her?" said Matilda. "Why, a few years ago I cut my leg sadly with a scythe, and went to the Coventry doctors with it; but they

" did

“ did me no good ; and coming home
“ by the White Cottage as the nearest
“ way, for I was very lame, the old wo-
“ man was sitting at her door, and asked
“ me what made me so lame. So I
“ told her ; and she said she could cure
“ me, if I would be ruled by her ; which
“ I was glad to be, as the doctors had
“ made me worse and worse. So she
“ got some herbs, mashed them, and
“ desired me to wash my leg well with
“ the juice made hot ; she then put on
“ some of the green herbs, bandaged up
“ my leg tight, and told me not to stir,
“ but to keep it laid up for a fortnight ;
“ but before that time was out, I got
“ well. Therefore I think, my lady, a
“ person who could do so good an action
“ can’t be a witch ; it must be the old
“ woman who lives upon the common ;
“ but I have almost every thing ruined ;
“ auricula and carnation pots tumbled

“over and broke, and the plants torn
“in pieces; tulips and hyacinths
“turned out of the mould, the glasses
“broke every night in the frames; and
“such noises I hear at midnight as make
“my courage quail.” — “Why did you
“not get up to see what it was?” said
lady Harrington. “Surely you might
“have the courage to look at them.” —
“Oh, yes, my lady, I have seen them
“many and many a time; they appear
“in the shape of monstrous cats, with
“eyes goggling all ways. I have counted
“twenty of them together, when they
“have been at their frolicks.” — “And
“why did you not hunt them away,”
said Matilda, “or set traps to catch
“them?” — “Oh, young lady, I am
“not afraid of a lion, and if they were
“real cats I should not mind a thousand
“of them; but they are devils’ imps in
“that shape; and if I was to affront one
“of

“of them, and it was to turn itself into
 “some hideous monster, it might be-
 “leave me of my wits.” — “But have
 “you any other reasons,” said lady
 Harrington, “for thinking the woman
 “in the White Cottage a witch?” —
 “Why, my lady, after she had cured my
 “leg, I took notice that the vine which
 “ran all the way up the gable-end of
 “her house wanted cutting; I told her
 “so, and cut it for her, for which she
 “was very thankful; and there is not
 “a finer vine in the country, nor one
 “which bears better fruit — as fine a
 “black cluster as ever was seen; the
 “sides of the house are covered with
 “roses and honey-suckles, and I have
 “trimmed them for her ever since. She
 “is a well spoken woman, and offered
 “me money for what I did; but I was
 “aware of her character, and would
 “have none of it. Besides, she would

“not be paid for curing my leg; but
“I don’t know, my ladies; for I saw
“nothing amiss about her, except her be-
“ing very ugly, and having three imps
“in her house, which I saw basking one
“day at the bottom of her garden. I
“went gently to take a peep at them
“through the bushes; but they were as
“cunning as I, for they shot off, and
“flew like arrows in at a chamber win-
“dow; so quick, that if my eyes did
“not deceive me, they never touched
“the honey-suckle against the house.”—
“And what were these creatures like?”
said Matilda in surprise. “Two of
“them, young lady, like black cats,
“and the other like a tabby; and one
“night, when the moon shone very
“clear, I saw them upon the top of her
“house, making a most hideous noise;
“so I gave a good shout, and they dart-
“ed in at the window again. But as
“this

“this person has been a good friend to
 “me, my lady, I should not like to see
 “her suffer; and these familiars may
 “belong to the old hag upon the
 “common.”

“Well, gardener,” said lady Harrington, “take what care you can, and
 “I hope we shall find out the person
 “who has done us so much damage.”

In the evening my lord related the steward's story; in which he saw nothing like witchcraft. The flea-bitten mare died, he said, certainly from age; Poppet's knees might be broke from Jarvis's head being overcharged with ale; the colts, cows, and yearlings, were recovered; and he thought that care, and a good farrier, would have been of more use than his people were willing to allow; that their having an idea of witchcraft

had prevented them from applying what was usual in such cases, and therefore the animals were longer before they recovered. As to the mare slipping her foal, he imputed it to the wetness of the season; and the sow eating her pigs, to their being dead, and the animal's having no other means of getting rid of them. Hens were subject to the roup; and the turkeys were killed, and the ducks probably frightened by the foxes; the pigeons being alarmed by the owl, who was certainly an enemy, was natural enough; and therefore, to develope these things, he invited them to go in the morning and pay a visit to one of the witches. Lady Harrington and her daughters agreed, the young men being at that time upon a visit.

The morning was fine, and they thought of going to the White Cottage first.

first. "Why, from the accounts," said my lord, "that is the best of the two; let us go to the common. I like to encounter the worst first. But do you, Elizabeth and Matilda, behave extremely well, or the old woman may play you some trick." — "I should like," said Miss Harrington, "to go to the White Cottage first, because, if I recollect, it looks neat; the other seemed to be a mere hovel, not fit for a human being." — "Don't be afraid, Elizabeth, I will guard you," said my lord, "and I want to see the young plantation of oaks close to the old wood which I made last year. The old woman may have bewitched them for aught I know; for that reason let us proceed to the common."

They met a girl about a quarter of a mile from the plantation, and asked her

if there was not a witch lived thereabouts. She said, "Yes." — "Did you ever hear of any mischief she did to her neighbours?" said Matilda. "Oh yes! I have heard of a great deal." — "Then tell us what you know." After some recollection, she said, "that her mother's cow last summer strayed away for three days, could not be found any where, and then came back all on a sudden; and it must be the witch that did it." — "You will, perhaps, shew us the way," said lady Harrington. "There is not much path," said the girl; "for the folks do not like to go so near a witch; but that is the house, and please your honours," pointing with her finger, and then sitting down upon a bank, as if she wished to make observations upon what was passing. As they came near the house it seemed the abode of wretchedness; they knocked at

at the door, but no one answered ; they then lifted up the latch, went in, and saw a very old woman asleep in a chair ; her cloaths in a very tattered condition ; and a bundle of rotten sticks, tied together with a rope, laid upon the clay-floor. The windows were broken in many places, and stuffed with rags ; the bed (if it might be so called) was a miserable assemblage of pieces of old sacks, on which a cat was laid, who did not seem pleased at the visitors, but suddenly bounced out at the door. The noise the animal made alarmed Miss Harrington, who gave a kind of scream, which awakened the old woman. She rubbed her eyes, and stared at them before she spoke, as if she could not believe what she saw. At last, looking round, she said, " Where am I ? where can I be ?" — " At home, good woman," said lady Harrington ; " we were walking past,"
" and

“and wished to sit down; will you give
“us leave?” — “Ah,” said the old
woman, “this is no place for such as
“you seem to be to sit down in; but,
“such as it is, your honours are welcome.
“I am very old, fourscore and odd;
“and what is still worse, they despise
“me for my age, which is a thing I can’t
“help; and as I am poor, it would be
“a happy thing for me if I was in a bet-
“ter world.” — “But what has made
“you so poor?” said my lord. “Please
“your honour,” she replied, “old age,
“and the loss of my children; I have
“lost six, one way or other, in less than
“ten years.” — “Those must be great
“losses indeed,” said lady Harrington.
“Yes,” she said, “I lost then the only
“stay and prop of my life, and all the
“joy too. I am grown unable to work;
“the parish allow me some little matter;
“but the folks of the village will not
“let

“let me live among them ; I believe,
“indeed, my crosses might make me
“say and do strange things, for I was
“little better than crazy for some time.
“Now nobody comes near me. I had
“been gathering some sticks out of his
“honour lord Harrington’s wood,
“and tired myself ; so that I believe I
“fell asleep ; and yet I must go out again
“for my dinner, or have none ; but I
“am so weary that I wish I could sleep
“for ever.” — “And what were you to
“have for dinner ?” said Matilda. “A
“few hop-tops, or foal’s-foot, young
“lady,” — “And is that all ?” —
“Yes,” she said, “with a bit of bread.
“I was looked upon once, and had
“friends ; but now I am an outcast ;
“for every body who loved me has
“been dead a great while, and a new
“set that know nothing of me are come
“in their places.” — “You shall have
“things

“things a little more comfortable about
“you,” said lady Harrington. “Ah,
“my good lady,” said the old woman,
“nothing vexes me so much as not to
“be able to do for myself. I am oblig-
“ed, as you see, to live in dirt; my
“heart is good, but I cannot make
“these old bones move.”

“Well,” said my lord as they walked
out, “are any of you bewitched?”—
“If we are,” said lady Harrington, “it
“must be with a fit of compassion, for
“I feel it extremely strong upon me.”—
“Indeed, madam,” said Matilda, “it
“affects us in the same way; and I
“hope you will, my lord, do something
“for this poor helpless creature.”—
“I will send to Coventry in the after-
“noon,” said lady Harrington, “for
“an entire change of cloaths; nothing
“gratifies me so much as assisting those
“who

“ who cannot help themselves. This
“ woman has the true English spirit in
“ her, old as she is, that would disdain
“ assistance but from necessity ; and the
“ infant, the infirm, and the aged, have
“ strong claims upon our benevolence.”

Mr. Butler overtook them, alighted,
and led his horse. They related the
adventure, and he told them, that the
people in the neighbourhood, notwithstanding all he could say to persuade
them to the contrary, were sure that the
woman in the White Cottage was a witch ;
that many others were suspected among
the lower class ; and some even of higher
rank were infected with the mania of
the times. “ My good Mr. Butler,”
said lady Harrington, “ I have been
“ reflecting upon this business, and a
“ difficulty is thrown in my way which
“ I do not know how to get over. You
“ and

“and I are not infected with this mania;
“yet I do not entertain a doubt but my
“people are, and who can I get to take
“care of the poor creature? There is
“a room over the garden-house; but if
“no one will go near her, she will be as
“badly off as ever.”—“Why that,”
said Mr. Butler, “I think I can remedy,
“if your ladyship will permit my wife’s
“maid Nelly. She is a courageous
“girl; we have two female servants now,
“and therefore Nelly is at your service for
“any business you may chuse to employ
“her upon.”—“I am much obliged
“to you,” returned lady Harrington;
“but at all events I will try my own
“household first; and if they should be
“averse, I think they will be ashamed
“of themselves when they find Nelly
“return without harm.”

Lady

Lady Harrington convened the household, and told them that many people had been wicked enough to say, that several women in the neighbourhood practised witchcraft, to the great annoyance of mankind; but that age and poverty were the only crimes she believed them guilty of; that she wished to relieve a person reputed a witch, whom she would clothe and protect, which must prove to them that there was no such thing; that she should send two of them to the cottage upon the common, in the morning, to convey the old woman to the Abbey; that she dismissed them for the present, and would in two hours settle with the housekeeper who was to go.

The time soon elapsed, and the housekeeper appeared. "Well, Vincent," said lady Harrington, "have my people
"got

“got the better of their fears, and are
“they prepared to shew their sense?”—
“No, I can’t say they are,” said the
housekeeper. “They one and all say,
“that they would go through fire and
“water to serve your ladyship; but
“they can’t abide witches, and are in
“fear of their lives from them.”

“But, Vincent, you cannot suppose a
“poor miserable old woman so danger-
“ous a thing as running into the fire,
“or plunging into the water; besides,
“I am persuaded (as I told you before)
“that there are no such beings as
“witches. I have seen this formidable
“creature; and I am sure it was poverty
“only that made her be taken for such.
“But, to come to the point, will any of
“them go?”

“Not one, my lady, neither men nor
“maids, but the gardener.”—“Then
“the

“ the gardener is the only one, except
“ yourself, that has common sense.”—
“ They are all crying their eyes out
“ about it, my lady,” said the house-
keeper. “ You must be sensible,”
returned lady Harrington, “ that my
“ servants ought to obey me.”—“ To
“ be sure, my lady,” said the house-
keeper; “ only witchcraft is such a cry-
“ ing sin; to be sure, if the lowest girl
“ in the house would go for the witch,
“ to oblige your ladyship I would go
“ with her; but indeed, my lady, they
“ one and all give it up.”—“ Then
“ they are one and all a parcel of
“ cowards,” said the lady. “ But as I
“ have great confidence in you, Vincent,
“ and ever had, (for you were always
“ superior in understanding to the com-
“ mon people,) and from what you
“ have now said I find I am right;
“ to-morrow you shall go to the cottage
“ upon

“upon the common.” — “My lady!”
exclaimed the housekeeper. “Yes,
“Vincent, to-morrow you shall go to the
“woman who has most cruelly been taken
“for a witch, and see her new-clothed;
“for I know I can depend upon your
“care; and it gives me the highest
“opinion of you, that you have offered
“your services upon this occasion, as it
“is a very proper example to all the
“other servants.” — “It is a long way
“to the common, my lady, and I am
“troubled with the rheumatism, which
“makes my ancles so poorly sometimes,
“that I can hardly hobble to church,”
said the housekeeper. “That I have
“taken into consideration,” returned
the lady; “and therefore you shall have
“the lazy black pad to carry you there.”
— “If the witch is very filthy and dirty,
“I shall not be able to touch her, my
“lady.” — “There is no occasion for
“that,

“that, Vincent; for Nelly, Mrs. Butler’s maid, is to go with you; and I am obliged to you, Vincent, for undertaking this business.”

Mrs. Vincent retired, not very well pleased with the honour.—Certain notions, of the witch having a figure of wax, &c. entered her imagination; the horrible idea of her being melted two-eighths of an inch every day conveyed the most tormenting reflection, and she did not once consider, that the Necromancer Time dissolved her daily, as it was. The night was spent in direful dreams; broomsticks were for ever presenting themselves to her terrified imagination; galloping through the air upon these implements turned her head giddy; and her sleep, instead of balm, became poison.

The

The morning opened brilliant and beautiful; the cart, black pad, and gardener were ready at the door; and lady Harrington, who felt herself extremely interested in the business, went to see them set off. Nelly, quite unconcerned, was jumping into the cart. "I am obliged to Mr. Butler," said my lady, "for permitting you to go on this errand for me; for my people are such cowards they dare not encounter an old woman of eighty."

Off they went. The gardener spoke only to the horse; Mrs. Vincent paced slowly after them, and, contrary to her usual custom, did not utter one syllable. Nelly went humming *Johnny Armstrong's good Night, or the cruelties of Barbara Allen*, without thinking at all.

When they arrived at the cottage, "Gardener," said Mrs. Vincent, "what
" are

“are we to do with the horses?” —
“I’ll hold them, madam, while you and
“Nelly get the witch ready; and then,
“if need be, I can lift her into the
“cart.” — “If I get off this beast,” said
Mrs. Vincent, “I can never get on
“again, for here is no horse-block;
“therefore I’ll not get off, not I. Nelly
“shall go in and get the old woman
“ready, and you too if you will. I can
“hold the horse, he is gentle enough.”
— “I thought, madam, you were afraid
“of the horse.” — “Not half so much
“as I am of impertinence,” said Vin-
cent; “therefore do you carry the
“bundle for Nelly, do you hear?” [*in a
loud voice.*] “Yes, madam,” he an-
swered in the same key; took the
bundle in his hand, gave it to Nelly
at the door, and sat himself upon the
grass. Every thing was quiet for a
quarter of an hour, when Nelly uttered a

kind of scream. The gardener jumped up, and went into the house.

“ Good gracious !” said Mrs. Vincent to herself, “ the witch has murdered “ the girl, and the gardener too for “ aught I know; but if I stay here to “ be made away with, I’ll be shot.” So, letting go the rein of the horse in the cart, she applied her whip violently to the side of the black pad, turned his head towards home, and rode as boldly as if she had been only five-and-twenty. The horse in the cart, having a very great affection for his own stable and his friend the black pad, set off after them. Mrs. Vincent hearing a tremendous rumbling behind her, urged her horse to the top of his speed, and the animal in the cart exerted all his strength, being resolved not to be left behind. The porter at the park-gate, hearing the clattering,

clattering, opened it, when the black pad darted through, the horse and cart immediately following, and arrived in a few moments at the grand entrance.

“ Oh, I am bewitched, and dying by inches!” screamed Vincent. “ I am sure this is not my lady’s horse; it can’t be hers; that infernal hag changed it in the stable this morning, and this is one of her familiars; it flew with me, I will take my oath it flew with me through a thunder storm. Oh, the poor girl is murdered, and the gardener too!” — Her strength was exhausted, and she fainted as they took her off the horse.

Nelly had taken the bundle from the gardener, and gone coolly into the cottage. “ I am come from her honour, lady Harrington, Goody,” said Nelly,

“ and have brought you here a nice suit
“ of clothes and linen, new from top
“ to toe; and there is Mrs. House-
“ keeper, and Mr. Columbine the gar-
“ dener, waiting with a cart for you.
“ My lady says you shall live in comfort
“ now.” — “ Then it was their honours
“ I saw yesterday,” said the old woman;
“ Heaven shower down its blessings
“ upon their heads! for I can do no-
“ thing but pray for them.”

“ Well, come,” said Nelly, “ here
“ are nice worsted stockings, good
“ strong shoes, and every thing com-
“ plete. Let me help you, for you
“ don’t seem very strong.” — “ No,”
said she, “ but I have been as stout as
“ any one in the parish, and would have
“ done out-door work with any she that
“ ever lived.” — “ Now,” said Nelly,
“ don’t you feel yourself pure and com-
“ fortable

“fortable in these nice things? Here
“is your cap; there, I have combed and
“righted your hair a little; and as sure
“as can be, now that you are smarted
“up, I have seen somebody like you,
“but not so old. What is your name,
“Goody?”—“My name,” said the old
woman, “is Gaps. I was born and
“bred in the village of Coombe; my
“eldest son Simon lived at Gosford
“Green, and was as famous a man for
“hedging, ditching, and thatching
“stacks, as ever lived; but he is dead,
“his wife is dead; and what is become
“of his poor fatherless and motherless
“children I don’t know.”

“Oh, sure,” bawled Nelly, “you are
“my grandmother! Oh that I should
“live so near you, and never find you
“out! What a beast am I! while you
“have been in want so long!” This

exclamation it was that brought in the gardener, and sent Mrs. Vincent and the black pad away post. "Oh, Mr. Columbine, I have found my dear grandmother, all rags, up to the neck in dirt, and hardly a morsel of bread to eat; and I have been living at Mr. Butler's for seven years in plenty." Then hugging the old woman, "My dear grandmother," said she, "I thought you had been dead long ago." Nelly again roared for joy; the old woman sobbed; the gardener wiped his eyes with the back of his hand, and then, putting it into his pocket, gave the old woman a shilling, saying to Nelly, "Now, my girl, let us be going, if you have done all your business." He looked out. "Mrs. Vincent and the cart are gone!" said the gardener. "Where?" said Nelly. "Home, I suppose," he replied. "I am

“ I am frightened out of my wits,” said Nelly ; “ I have been too long, and “ shall get ill-will for this.”—“ No, no,” said the gardener, “ when they know “ all, you will have nobody angry with “ you; but I am afraid you won’t be “ able to walk so far, Goody; we have “ a long mile to go.”—Yes, give her but time, she walked farther every day; so, leaning upon Nelly, and taking the gardener’s arm, she proceeded slowly towards the Abbey.

The family were in great consternation at Vincent’s account that the black pad was a familiar of the witch’s; it was shaking from the violent exertions it had made, and yet stood at the door; when lady Harrington hearing a bustle, and seeing the people assembled, inquired what was the matter: One of the servants told her something which she could not understand; at last she found
that

that Mrs. Vincent was almost frightened to death. My lord, returning from his morning's ride, received the same information; and the horse and cart with the black pad were standing together. "Why do not you put up that horse?" said my lord to one of the grooms. "Mrs. Vincent says, my lord, that it is one of the devil's imps, and flew with her through thunder and lightning; and as that is the case, my lord, I don't much like to touch it." — "Come, Matilda," said my lord, "you, I know, are not foolish; mount this horse, and we will go in search of the gardener." Matilda mounted the bewitched pad, and went with my lord.

At that instant Bridget came out; and one of them telling her that their young lady was gone to certain destruction upon the black pad; — "Well," said Bridget, "I would not be in her skin
" for

“for a thousand pounds, no nor ten
“thousand neither. Ah, did you but
“know what poor Mrs. Vincent has
“gone through, and what she has seen!”
“What?” said the butler, “do tell us.”
— “Why,” said Bridget, “she did not
“ride home upon a horse, but upon a
“thing without ears* ; for she vows she
“saw none till she stopped at the door,
“and then it raised them a little ; and
“she says that she flew through thunder
“and lightning ; that she did not feel the
“horse move at all ; that she lost her
“breath, and her eyes flashed fire every
“minute ; and I do not know whether
“she will ever be able to see again. —
“But what can folks expect that have
“to do with such wicked devils as
“witches ; for this is all their doing,
“I dare say, and a fine mess will be
“made on’t.”

* A horse, when pressed to the top of his speed, constantly squats his ears.

They

They now saw lord Harrington and Matilda returning. The porter at the lodge gate had told them, that the black pad had run full speed through, and the horse and cart after him ; that they seemed ready to drop ; and that he was afraid Mrs. Vincent must have broke her neck ; for he never *did see* any body ride so furious before. They had likewise met the gardener, Nelly, and Goody Gaps, and heard the story of Nelly having found her grandmother. My lord then went into the house, and informed lady Harrington, who rejoiced at finding the old woman to be what she wished ; for Vincent's fright had discomposed her mind a little.

Nelly ran to the parsonage, and informed Mr. Butler of the joyful news ; but lamented that her grandmother was to be in a room in the Abbey garden, observing, that there was a nice snug
room

room to let at the end of his pales, and as she had a little money she would pay the rent of it; for she could rise two hours sooner, or do any thing, so she might have her under her eye. Mr. Butler said he would mention it to lady Harrington, and for that purpose would go to the Abbey.

Mr. Butler informed lady Harrington of Nelly's desire of having her grandmother under her care. "I am glad of it," said the lady; "for I am sorry to say that my people are such fools, that they will not come into a room where she is; and I began to be afraid she would be but indifferently taken care of, except by the gardener. But I will give Nelly the furniture I intended for the garden house; I will find the old woman clothes, and allow her half a crown a week, if Mrs. Butler will let that good girl attend her a little; and the parish must make their former allowance."

Goody Gaps sat in the buttery with the gardener, and the household now and then took a peep at her. At length the head cook, a decent elderly woman, took courage to go into the room, spoke first to the gardener, and then to the old woman; and her answers being extremely plain and easy to be understood, she entered into conversation concerning her birth, parentage, and education; and found, from the account she gave of herself, that she remembered her when her husband was living. This wore off in a great measure the distaste and dread which the servants had conceived against her; and the old woman lived in the cottage, under the care of her grand-daughter Nelly Gaps, in peace and comfort. 5 JA 59

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

